

ROUTLEDGE CLASSICAL TRANSLATIONS

BYZANTINE READINGS OF ANCIENT HISTORIANS

TEXTS IN TRANSLATION, WITH
INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES

ANTHONY KALDELLIS



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The survival of ancient Greek historiography is largely due to its preservation by Byzantine copyists and scholars. This process entailed selection, adaptation, and commentary, which shaped the corpus of Greek historiography in its transmission. By investigating those choices, Kaldellis enables readers to gain a better understanding of the reception and survival of Greek historical writing.

Byzantine Readings of Ancient Historians includes translations of texts written by Byzantines on specific ancient historians. Each translated text is accompanied by an introduction and notes to highlight the specific context and purpose of its composition. In order to present a rounded picture of the reception of Greek historiography in Byzantium, a wide range of genres have been considered, such as poems and epigrams, essays, personalized scholia, and commentaries. *Byzantine Readings of Ancient Historians* is therefore an important resource for scholars and students of ancient history.

Anthony Kaldellis is Professor of Classics at the Ohio State University. His areas of expertise include Byzantine studies and Greek historiography.

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BYZANTINE READINGS OF ANCIENT HISTORIANS

Texts in translation with introductions and notes

Anthony Kaldellis

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PREFACE

The present volume contains translations of a range of texts which illustrate how Byzantine readers interacted with ancient historio-graphy between the ninth and fifteenth centuries. It excludes the major corpus of such discussions in Photios' *Bibliothēke*, which will hopefully appear separately in a later volume of this series. I thank Matthew Gibbons at Routledge for supporting this series, an ideal venue for classicists and Byzantinists to talk to each other. Also, for valuable help with the translation and discussion of many of the texts in this volume, I thank Ilias Anagnostakis, Stephanos Efthymiades, Scott Kennedy, Charis Messis, Ioannis Polemis, and the two anonymous readers of the press, who also made valuable suggestions.

INTRODUCTION

The core of this volume is a series of translations of texts that reveal the multifaceted ways in which Byzantine intellectuals read and responded to ancient historiography. It includes poems, the prefaces to the Constantinian *Excerpta*, scholia in manuscripts, essays with reflections on ancient history, and a longish commentary – though it excludes the entries on historians in Photios’ *Bibliothēke*, to which a later volume in this series will be devoted. This book is addressed to a general scholarly audience. It hopes to draw classicists into a discussion with Byzantinists about questions of reception, transmission, and the reciprocal influence of ancient historiography and Byzantine intellectual culture. But as Byzantium is an arcane and inaccessible field to non-specialists, and as even most Byzantinists themselves specialize in various subdisciplines and are not necessarily familiar with all the authors who make up the polyphony of this volume, detailed introductions or commentaries were deemed necessary. Thus the translated text is sometimes a smaller part of its respective chapter (as with the *Excerpta*), but sometimes it accounts for the bulk of it (as with Kanabouzes’ commentary on Dionysios). The goal of this project is, as mentioned, to expose *reciprocal* influences: how, out of the many hundreds of historical texts that were written in antiquity, Byzantine tastes, needs, and choices fundamentally shaped the canon of Greek historiography that we have today; and, conversely, how the Byzantines were themselves shaped in their historical thinking by the works of the ancient masters that they chose, for so many various reasons, to keep, copy, and study through the centuries. The following introduction explores these two themes.

RECEPTION IN A STRONG SENSE

Among many classicists and even more Byzantinists, “reception” usually refers to “the later history of a thing,” to the ways in which it was perceived, adapted, and used by individuals or cultures subsequent to the moment of its creation. The “thing” in question may be a text, artifact, monument, person, moment in history, or entire culture. The study of its reception is thus a subordinate project to the

study of its original form and meaning and of the context and purpose of its creation, or “first life.” In most cases, it is an exercise in curiosity that offers little or nothing of importance to the classicist. At best one may turn up an interesting Byzantine reading of an ancient author that complements or confirms a modern reading arrived at independently by other means, but usually it yields readings that tell us more about Byzantium than about the ancient author; or it may explain why the thing in question, or knowledge of it, survived at all. But most of the time the results are trivial or nonexistent for the classicist, good for footnotes at best. No scholar of Plato cares how Prodrornos read Plato, and no modern scholar of ancient Greek historiography has turned to Byzantine authors for guidance.

This is a weak sense of reception, and it is not theoretically challenging. Perhaps we should just call this version the *Nachleben* (“afterlife”) of a subject, and use “reception” for a different project of inquiry. What if the form, identity, or constitution of our artifact was not a settled matter at the point of reception but in fact took shape after it, through the very process of reception? A great deal of modern theory (often called postmodern) challenges the notion that things have fixed essences and finite moments of creation that encode specific original intentions.¹ What if our artifact came into being gradually, through the accretion of layered meanings and the interventions of later “users”? We must remember that our vantage point is backward: what we see first, our first impressions of a cultural artifact, are precisely the later interventions. These often form our basic, “common sense” view of it, which we often mistake for a (putative) original. This is the predicament of reception.

The classical tradition as we know it, embodied in texts and monuments, does not consist of a series of self-explanatory artifacts, some of which survived and some of which were lost. Its configuration, contours, technologies of use, and more importantly its meanings and symbolic associations were not fixed for us at the (classical) moment of their creation but are also the product of a continuous process of *subsequent* selection, adaptation, recombination, reinterpretation, and of course political use. It is the post-classical that defines the classical, that brings it into being and gives it shape. This is true on an obvious semantic level, as it is only in retrospect that the classical appears to have been classical: it becomes that only in relation to something that is defined as different from it, and that can be done only by reception. It is also true in many of the particulars: the selection of artifacts for survival (or loss); the form in which we receive them; and the values that we associate with them. All bear the imprint of millennia of reception, which

have constituted them as classical for us.

The process never begins or ends, for every point is a point of reception. The challenge for scholars is to examine how it gradually gave rise to what we know as the classical tradition, and how the ancient material was molded by the needs and values of self-consciously post-classical societies. Imagining possible alternatives is one way to escape the determinism and teleology urged upon us by the tradition that we face. The Athenocentrism of that tradition and its focus on the period of the democracy is one place to start: we are now beginning to understand that it was the product not only of Alexandrine literary tastes but also of Roman political interests in settling the conquered Greek territories.² But we can imagine alternative Hellenisms that might have emerged under other circumstances, for example one centered on Lesbos, which produced the most writers and poets after Athens in the archaic and classical periods. What would a Hellenism focused on lyric rather than tragedy, on song rather than rhetoric, and on Hellanikos rather than Thucydides look like?³ And the Byzantines too played a part in exacerbating classical Athenocentrism. It is likely that, in terms of texts, potential alternatives survived until late antiquity, even if not valorized as much as their Athenian counterparts, only to disappear later, mostly through neglect.⁴

Similar processes have shaped famous archaeological sites, often in subtle ways. Few today realize that the “sacred way” at Delphi along which visitors go up from the Roman agora to the temple of Apollo was in fact a creation of the early Byzantine phase of the site, possibly of the sixth century AD, so after the oracle had ceased to function and right before the abandonment of the site. The “classical” experience had been different.⁵ At Athens too, the valorization of the Parthenon as the supreme and defining monument of the city, and the beginning of targeted pilgrimages to it, date to the Byzantine period, when it was a church of the Virgin. It was then that literal worship of the Parthenon began in earnest, and when the temple was associated with a rhetoric of divine light that passed, imperceptibly, into the experience of early modern and then modern visitors to the site. Byzantine ways of viewing the monument were thereby assimilated and then projected back onto the classical period, when they are not in fact attested.⁶ We have only begun to explore the manifold ways in which Byzantine choices, despised or denied for so long, actually fashioned the classical experiences that modernity has valued so highly. Consider for example the different fates of texts and statues. Almost everything that we have of classical Greek literature we have because the Byzantines chose to preserve it, selecting it out from all the rest that

had survived down to late antiquity. After the foundation of Constantinople, the emperors also sent out agents to search through the Greek cities and bring to the capital the best and most emblematic works, including the statues of Olympian Zeus, Lindian Athena, and works by many masters, presumably the authentic ones. But all of those were subsequently destroyed, except the Serpent Column from Delphi. Therefore, what we have of texts is by and large what the Byzantines chose to keep, but what we have of statues is what they chose to leave behind, a lot of it second-rate stuff and Roman copies. How different our notion of classical art would be if we had the Constantinopolitan collections instead.⁷

This is a goal toward which classicists and Byzantinists can – indeed, must – collaborate. One area includes all the technologies and ideologies of learning through which the Byzantines studied the classical tradition, repackaged it, and transmitted it to the next phase of scholarship, in the west. These include codices (as opposed to papyrus rolls), the minuscule script, the transformation of ancient self-standing commentaries into marginal scholia, *lexika*, *epimerismi*, anthologies, *gnomologia*, and, starting dynamically in the twelfth century, original Byzantine scholia and commentaries.⁸ Another area of collaboration would be to explain the selection of surviving ancient literature, that is why, out of the hundreds of texts that were written during antiquity in each field (e.g., philosophy, tragedy, rhetoric, and historiography), we have around 5 per cent or less. The factors behind this selection were late imperial Roman and Byzantine, with different ones operating in each field.

In a recent article, I outlined a tentative argument regarding the corpus of ancient Greek historiography: what Byzantine interests in history might explain the selection of texts that we have?⁹ It is important that we not extrapolate them only from that selection, which would make the argument circular, but instead look at the points of interest in the past which the Byzantines displayed in their own chronicles of world history and other writings. The following areas can be identified, and indeed it turns out that they map closely onto the surviving body of ancient Greek historiography: interest in the mythistory of the most important peoples of the Mediterranean, especially those whose traditions competed with the Old Testament; the Near Eastern (e.g., Persian) context of sacred history; the foundation of Rome; the Roman civil wars at the end of the Republic; and early imperial history, especially of the Christian empire. It was these interests that shaped the selection of ancient texts. So rather than see Byzantine historiography as a worthy sequel to its ancient counterpart, as is often done, we might reverse

this perspective and see ancient historiography as a corpus created to function as an auxiliary to the real thing, namely the Byzantine view of history.

The texts translated and discussed in this volume complement rather than directly reinforce this argument, by displaying a variety of ways through which Byzantine scholars, intellectuals, and courtiers interacted with the ancient texts. These include poetic dedications that allusively recast ancient figures to encode contemporary relationships (ch. 1); thematic anthologies (ch. 2); pagan–Christian polemics about the emperor Constantine (ch. 3); scholarly debates (stemming from the classroom) over the style of Thucydides (ch. 4); poems on reports about the exotic customs of ancient peoples (ch. 5); essays on Greek history and its relevance for the present (ch. 6); and a long commentary that interrogated anew the relationship between the Greeks and the Romans at a time (the fifteenth century) when it had again become a pressing question for Greek-speakers under Latin rule (ch. 7).

A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BYZANTINE RECEPTION OF ANCIENT HISTORIOGRAPHY

As argued above, the disciplines of both Classics and Byzantine Studies would benefit from understanding better the processes of transmission, survival, and loss that produced and shaped the corpus of ancient literature that has survived, including that of Greek historiography. But where are classicists to begin in the unfamiliar and not always accessible terrain of the Byzantine material? Or, for that matter, Byzantinists who work on other aspects of the culture? The present discussion is offered as a basic field guide, or even checklist, for the study of this question that can be applied to individual authors. It has already been deployed, tested, and honed in the production of a chapter on the reception of Thucydides (co-authored with Scott Kennedy for the *Cambridge Companion to Thucydides*).¹⁰ Its inclusion in this volume serves two goals, first to outline the state of the question and the nature of its materials and resources for those who are new to this area of study, and, second, to stimulate and facilitate the production of additional such studies dedicated to other authors.

The following guide, or checklist, is a template for tracking the history of a given author through the Byzantine period; it surveys the manuscript traditions; scholia; Photios' *Bibliothēke*; Konstantinos VII's *Excerpta*; the *Souda*; biographical traditions; excerpts and summaries; gnomologia; lexika; his reuse in Byzantine chronicles; and *mimesis* by Byzantine authors.

Our starting point must be the manuscript tradition of each author. This is the prime material point of contact between the ancient author and his Byzantine readers and copyists. There is sometimes a specialized bibliography dedicated to the transmission of each author, which should include the prefatory matter of his critical editions.¹¹ An extremely useful and accessible snapshot of the survival of each author, in the form of a list of manuscripts that can be sorted in different ways, is provided by the website *Pinakes* maintained by the Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes of the French Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS). Most classicists and historians are used to dealing with texts in a highly processed form that we have come to take for granted, and we may be lured into imagining that ancient and medieval audiences also encountered them in similar ways, or even that they circulated in premodern times in the ways in which they do today. Brief exposure to any author's tradition, in all its messiness and terrible contingency, dispels such notions.

The shape of a manuscript tradition can be extremely revealing in many different ways. Starting with quantity, an author who survives in many copies would obviously have been read more frequently and by more Byzantines than another who survives in only one, and in the case of those who were used as school textbooks there are more manuscripts in a particular line of transmission than is even useful for modern editors. Additional copies in that line usually only introduce errors but offer little that is new or useful. This is one way to identify texts that most educated Byzantines can be expected to have read (Thucydides' *History* is among them). At the opposite end are authors who survive in only one exemplar, for example Zosimos (see [ch. 3](#)). We correctly tend to assume that the surviving manuscripts are but a sample of those that were in existence at any time in Byzantine libraries, but we do not know whether it was a representative sample. In the case of Zosimos, there certainly was at least one other from which this one (Vat. gr. 156) was copied in middle Byzantine times, but then later, in the Palaiologan era, it is possible that only it survived. The community of scholars who read it in the Chora monastery (and wrote comments in it) might well have actually constituted the whole of Zosimos' readership at that time.

The second area of distribution is chronology. Obviously, there are more copies of most authors from the later Byzantine period, as late copies tended to replace earlier ones and stood a better chance of making it to the era of modern collections and library acquisitions. The fifteenth century witnesses an explosion in numbers for some authors, but this reflects the addition of Italian demand to the market for copies; it shows more how Byzantine copyists responded to this

development than how Byzantines were reading the texts. Early copies for most historians usually means from the ninth, tenth, or eleventh century. These are precious to modern textual editors because they are closer to their moment of transliteration, which entails, among other things, that the text they transmit has undergone less standardization according to Byzantine school norms. Such early copies are also interesting when they reveal how they were read in later times, as with the ninth-century Thucydides in Pal. gr. 252 read in the twelfth century by Ioannes Tzetzes (see [ch. 4](#)).

The manuscript tradition potentially contains another key to how authors were read: with what other texts were they bundled? Well, the rationale behind the selection of texts that make up many Byzantine manuscript escapes us still: they appear to us as a random *mélange*. But other choices are more meaningful. Thucydides, for example, was sometimes bundled in a discrete package with one or both of his two late antique biographers, just as he often is today, or with the essay by Dionysios of Halikarnassos on Thucydides' style.¹² Xenophon's historical works were sometimes bundled, in the early manuscripts, with other works by Xenophon, showing that the primary interest was in the author himself, not in the thematic aspects of the individual works.¹³ In fact, Herodotos, Thucydides, and Xenophon's *Hellenika* seem not to have been placed together in a single book to form a sequential "history of Greece" until Bessarion did it in the mid fifteenth century: see Marc. gr. 365 (with Diogenes), 364, and 526 (with many other texts). This was a time when Byzantine thinkers were reevaluating their relationship to ancient Greece and to Greek identity generally.¹⁴ Until that time they generally did not have an interest in classical Greek history as such.¹⁵ Their interest in the historians of classical Greece was either rhetorical-stylistic or, to the degree that it actually was historical, it was in using them as models for writing contemporary history.¹⁶ Thus Bessarion's innovative bundling of historical texts at that moment was culturally and intellectually significant. He was known to be interested in preserving the Greek past.

In some cases, the manuscript tradition reveals that a discrete block of a historian's text was broken off from the rest, because of some special interest that it held, and transmitted separately; in those cases, the separate block sometimes had a better chance of survival than the rest. This happened with Diodoros of Sicily (see [ch. 5](#)): books 1–5 (prehistory) and, separately, 11–20 (a coordinating Mediterranean history of ca. 500–300 AD) had separate traditions. The Byzantines were interested in Euhemerized accounts of the prehistory of the

pagan peoples as well as in the chronological coordination of ancient national histories, given that so much early Christian historiography focused on those issues. By contrast, they were not so interested in the Hellenistic kingdoms, which is why books 21–40 did not fare so well. So too with Appian and Cassius Dio: their accounts of the Roman civil wars culminating in the establishment of the Roman monarchy – the very monarchy under which the Byzantines lived – were detached from their general histories of Rome and survived in better shape than the rest.¹⁷

Byzantine copyists could intervene in the text itself. For example, they could regularize its grammar in accordance with current norms. This is an issue that preoccupied Tzetzes as he was reading the old Thucydides in Pal. gr. 252 and reacting to the corrections made by previous editors (see [ch. 4](#)). It is also a challenge to modern textual editors, as they try to recover the original words of an author. Moving from the politics of grammar to the politics of religion, whole passages could be excised or introduced. The loss of almost the entire account of the reign of Diocletian, the persecutor of Christianity, from the anti-Christian history of Zosimos can be viewed with suspicion; so too can the annoying lacuna of just a few lines in the *Wars* (otherwise a well-preserved text) where Prokopios explains his grounds for skepticism that Jesus promised Abgar of Edessa that his city would remain inviolable.¹⁸ The converse phenomenon was the interpolation of material, such as the infamous passage in Josephos which accepts Jesus as the Messiah and attributes miracles to him (the so-called *Testimonium Flavianum*). This was known to Eusebios in the early fourth century – if it was not forged by him in one line of transmission that later beat out the others. The earliest mss. of Josephos are from the eleventh century, and all contain the passage, though there are signs of the existence of other lines that did not contain it.¹⁹

The manuscripts also contain Byzantine scholia (or marginal comments) made on ancient authors. They also contain ancient comments, which Byzantine copyists often preserved. In fact, there was a general process by which self-standing ancient commentaries on classical authors were broken up and turned into a series of notes and glosses that were added into the margins of the codices preserving them.²⁰ On the whole, this was a more efficient way of reading text and commentary in tandem than awkwardly keeping two papyrus rolls open at the proper places, as had to be done in ancient times. Classical scholarship has expended some effort to publish what it takes to be ancient scholia on the ancient authors, especially on the poets, but it has not served the Byzantine scholia well,

which are sometimes found side by side in the same manuscripts. There are no established conventions about where to place them: they are sometimes placed in the introduction of an edition, as curiosities; in the critical apparatus; in the notes (again, as curiosities); or sometimes they get swept up in the publication of the ancient scholia. Eleanor Dickey's magisterial survey of *Ancient Greek Scholarship* emphasizes how much work remains to be done in this area; her book is now the standard reference for the state of publication of all scholia, ancient or Byzantine. Given that we lack Byzantine commentaries on the ancient historians, with the one exception of Kanaboutzes' commentary on Dionysios of Halikarnassos ([ch. 7](#)), scholia are a good place to see how Byzantine readers reacted to an ancient text. There was a time when Italian scholars pioneered their publication, enabling the three chapters of this book that are dedicated to Byzantine scholia, usually made by multiple readers, in three manuscripts (of Zosimos, Thucydides, and Diodoros).

After the manuscript tradition, there are three standard Byzantine sites where the reception of an ancient historian must next be traced: the *Bibliothēke* of Photios (mid ninth century); the *Excerpta* commissioned by Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos (mid tenth century); and the encyclopedia of classical studies known as the *Souda* (late tenth century). As the present series aims to publish a volume on the *Bibliothēke*'s coverage of the ancient historians,²¹ and as the present one includes a chapter on the *Excerpta* ([ch. 2](#)), only a few words need be said about them here, for they are indispensable items on our checklist. The *Bibliothēke* is a massive series of book reviews and summaries begun by Photios before he became patriarch of Constantinople (858–867, 877–886) but to which he probably added entries for many years thereafter. Among the many hundreds of works covered in its 280 entries, many can be classified as historiography, and among them the emphasis is on ancient and late antique works rather than more recent Byzantines ones. The *Bibliothēke* is important for the following reasons. First, it contains summaries of lost works, sometimes extensive (e.g., of Ktesias), making its entries our main source for them and, by extension, also for the events they discussed. Second, Photios often preserves biographical information about the ancient authors (see below). And third, he often delivers verdicts on an author's literary style, approach to history, and opinions about politics, personalities, and religion. Certainly, we should not treat him as a representative of all Byzantine intellectuals, but this unusually full record of his views gives us a reference point by which to fill in the spectrum of opinion.²² The texts that

Photios had available, and the negative verdicts that he expressed about texts that he read but which were subsequently lost, provide one index by which we can measure the survival of ancient historiography in Byzantium and the factors that may have led to the eventual demise of some authors.²³

Thucydides is a particular case in the *Bibliothēke*: he does not receive an entry but it is clear that Photios had read him and even used him as a standard against which to measure other historians, despite his criticisms of his style. The lack of a separate entry suggests that, perhaps alone among ancient historians, Thucydides was too well known to Photios' audience to need an introduction. Another particular case is Plutarch: the entry on the *Lives* consists of a series of excerpts, whose selection and organization remain unexplained.

The *Excerpta historica* commissioned by Konstantinos VII was an even more massive project of compilation: texts by around thirty historians, and possibly more, were cut up into excerpts based on thematic categories that were then pasted together in fifty-three topical volumes (see [ch. 2](#) for discussion and a list of the authors). Of the fifty-three volumes, only one survives entire along with long portions of three more. The *Excerpta* is important for the following reasons. First, its surviving books preserve long passages from authors who are otherwise lost, or from parts of their works that are lost. Second, even in the case of authors who survive, the editors may have been working from manuscript traditions of those authors that were different from the ones that survive today. Third, like the *Bibliothēke*, the *Excerpta* also constitutes an index for the survival of texts until the mid tenth century. But whereas Photios reviewed all manner of books, both those that he liked and those he did not, the decision by the editors of the *Excerpta* to include passages from a certain author placed a kind of seal of approval on him that was backed by the prestige of the court. This does not mean that every author included received an all-purpose *imprimatur*; the roster, after all, included anti-Christian writers such as Eunapios and Zosimos. But the selection seems to have been made on historiographical, not religious, grounds. Authors were included who had passages worth reading on one of the fifty-three thematic topics. What remains to be ascertained by future research is whether these choices made at the court affected the survival rate of specific historians in the subsequent tradition, whether positively (by endowing them with prestige) or negatively (by superseding their integral texts with the *Excerpta* itself, which was then mostly lost). For example, it has been established that the editors of the *Souda* two generations later obtained much of their historiographical material from the *Excerpta*.

The *Souda* (sometimes erroneously spelled *Suda* or *Suidas*) is a dictionary or encyclopedia of mostly ancient history and literature. It has over 30,000 entries and is a mine of information for ancient authors and texts, including biographical information and fragments, which are still being discovered or reattributed on a yearly basis. A majority of the 856 lost authors in Felix Jacoby's *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (FGrH) – currently being redone, updated, and expanded in Ian Worthington's *Brill's New Jacoby* – have a *Souda* entry that typically lists their works, and many of the other entries consist of excerpts from ancient works of literature. The trick lies in identifying the source, proximate or intermediary, and also in filtering out the false positives (as illustrated in [ch. 6](#), the third essay). Thus, a thorough search for the presence of an ancient historian in the *Souda* should go beyond his proper entry to possible passages excerpted from his work in other entries. Until recently, scholars plundered the *Souda* in search of material from their particular authors but now some are turning more systematically to study how the work was put together.²⁴ Still, the starting point for any such search remains v. 5 of Adler's magnificent edition of the *Souda*, containing an index of authors. This can be duplicated, or complemented, by the searchable English translation of the *Souda* (with notes and commentary) that is being placed online at stoa.org ("Suda On-Line") and is now almost complete.

We have already briefly mentioned the author biographies that Byzantine scholars had available to them. Thucydides' *History* was sometimes prefaced by a life of the author, though this was the case only with him, and Markellinos' *Life* is less a biography as we might imagine it and more an introduction to the style of his writing (see [ch. 4](#)). But the biographical tradition for ancient authors is relevant to their Byzantine reception. There are three main interlinked sources for it, aside from incidental references in other texts: these three are Hesychios of Miletos (early sixth century, but known indirectly), Photios' *Bibliothēke*, and the *Souda*. Hesychios wrote the *Onomatologos*, or *Table of Eminent Writers*, a form of *De viris illustribus*. He included historians (being himself the author of a Roman and world history), but only pagan authors. Unfortunately, his work is lost and we do not know its chronological coverage: it may have included only classical authors or it may have reached to Hesychios' own time; in any case it was at least partially based on lost Hellenistic antecedents in the tradition of Kallimachos' *Pinakes*. Moreover, it seems that "*Hesychios' Onomatologos*" became a generic label for collections of authors' biographies in Byzantium, so we cannot take any text circulating under that title as stemming necessarily from Hesychios. But a later version of his *Onomatologos*, expanded down to Byzantine

times and augmented with entries on Christian writers, seems to have been used by the editors of the *Souda* (see their entry for Hesychios himself: H 611). The *Souda* contains a large number of entries on authors who may be regarded as historians, far more than those whose works survive today; in some cases, ancient authors are known largely or exclusively from these entries, which also list their works in addition to providing brief biographies. It is possible that these entries are edited versions of the original entries in the *Onomatologos*.²⁵

There remains the question of the biographical information available to Photios when he was writing his entries on historians in the *Bibliothēke*. These have affinities to the material in the *Souda*, so it has been proposed that he was working within the same tradition. But the details remain controversial.²⁶ More work remains to be done on this question.

Excerpts and summaries of ancient historical works were made outside the *Bibliothēke* and *Excerpta*. Photios, for example, made a separate long summary of the *Ecclesiastical History* of the Arian Philostorgios in addition to the entry on him in the *Bibliothēke*, and it is from the former that we mostly know the work.²⁷ The tenth century witnessed the production of an epitome of Arrian's *Anabasis* and selections from Polybios (in 947), possibly in the same scriptorium.²⁸ During the reign of Michael VII Doukas (1071–1078), Ioannes Xiphilinos, nephew of the homonymous patriarch of Constantinople (1064–1075), made a long epitome of the *Roman History* of Cassius Dio, which is one of the main sources from which we know that text. He paid special attention to the transition from the Republic to the empire.²⁹ In the late fourteenth century, selections from Plutarch's *Lives*, speeches from Thucydides, and from Zonaras were translated into Aragonese for the benefit of Juan Fernández de Heredia, Grand Master of Rhodes (1377–1396), apparently through the intermediary of prior paraphrases into “modern” Greek (the issue of these paraphrases bears further investigation).³⁰ It is likely that more such summaries and selections of extracts will be discovered or postulated. All such works, of course, deserve to be studied in their own right as motivated and deliberate adaptations that addressed contemporary concerns.

There were two more sites where briefer extracts and selections from an ancient author could appear in Byzantine manuscripts: *gnomologia* (or moral florilegia, or collections of moralizing aphorisms) and *lexika*. *Gnomologia* have only recently begun to attract more sustained attention by textual editors and

literary scholars, as they used to be considered dull collections of material that we mostly have from the integral works of the authors they included. Yet this didactic literature extracted aphorisms from narratives in creative ways and sometimes linked those lessons to the author's putative biography. And if these collections circulated as widely as some specialists think they did, they provide an important window into the image of an author that the average Byzantine reader may have encountered and an explanation for the proliferation of specific passages or phrases in secondary quotation. In her model study of the reception of Xenophon, Inmaculada Pérez Martín provides a useful and brief introduction to this material.³¹ Unfortunately, much of it has not yet been published and that which has is not yet accessible via the TLG (or Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, the electronic database of Greek literature).

Another important aspect of an ancient author's Byzantine profile was his presence in lexika, though it is often overlooked. Admittedly, Byzantine lexika (also known as *Etymologika*) exist in a convoluted state and have been published only incompletely,³² but at least most of those that have made it into print are accessible via the TLG (which reasonably includes the *Souda* in its category of lexicography). This too is not a body of texts that should be overlooked. For instance, a global search in the TLG for the names of Herodotos, Thucydides, Xenophon, or Prokopios will yield most of its results (sometimes hundreds of them) in the domain of lexicography. The same is not true, or is true to a far lesser degree, with authors such as Polybios and Appian. Lexika were normative guides to the correct usage of classical words, phrases, and expressions and to that end cited ancient authorities. These results not only flesh out the Byzantine profile of a classical author but reveal the extent to which he was used, alongside Aristophanes, Plato, and Demosthenes, as a model of prose composition in the Byzantines' own "high style" efforts. Moreover, some of the entries do contain variant forms that are not preserved in an author's manuscript tradition or pose questions about how the tradition might have regularized, say, the spelling of Thucydides.³³

The classical historians could probably not have imagined that they would end up in gnomologia, lexika, or works such as the *Souda*, though the historians of late antiquity might have foreseen it, seeing as they lived in a world that was already producing such works. What historians expect is that they will be read and used by those who are interested in the events whose story they are telling and who want to think about the nature of human beings and of history itself.

We turn now, in our checklist, to the use made of ancient historians in Byzantine works of history. Here we must draw a distinction between the use of an ancient historian to retell the events that he covered – for instance, a chronicler’s use of Xenophon or Ktesias to recount the history of Persia using the material provided by those ancient historians – and the use of an ancient historian as a template or model for writing the history of later events – for example, Prokopios’ modeling his account of the plague outbreak of 542 AD on the famous plague narrative in Thucydides. This distinction overlaps largely (but not exclusively) with another one within the genres of Byzantine historical writing, that is between chronicles that provided sweeping if condensed coverage of world history from antiquity to the present on the one hand, and more detailed histories of contemporary events on the other.³⁴ We will begin with the first.

The main chronicles in which the secondary use of ancient historians can be traced are the following: Ioannes Malalas (sixth century), Ioannes of Antioch (seventh century?), Georgios Synkellos (ca. 800), Georgios the Monk or the Sinner (Hamartolos) (870s), Symeon the Logothete (mid tenth century), Pseudo-Symeon (late tenth century), Michael Psellos’ *Brief History*, and Ioannes Zonaras’ *Epitome* (mid twelfth century). Editions (and in some cases translations) are listed in the bibliography, except for Pseudo-Symeon, which remains mostly unpublished. Of course, there are many more Byzantine chronicles, but the later ones are likely to be dependent on the earlier ones, usually condensing them. Not all those listed here are equally user-friendly, however. Those whose sources have been mostly identified and laid out by the editors are Georgios Synkellos, Georgios the Monk, Symeon the Logothete, and Psellos. Synkellos is probably the most important one for our purposes as he tends to quote his authorities at length, had access to more materials than later chroniclers, and preserves unique fragments (including, for example, of the Babylonian Berossos and the Egyptian Manetho). Malalas is a problem because, in the manner of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, he made up sources, turned much of history into a game of silliness, and, moreover, survives only in a later abridgment. Scholars should be extremely cautious in identifying and extracting “lost” ancient authors from him.³⁵ As for Ioannes of Antioch, who is often confused with Ioannes Malalas (also from Antioch), there are now two competing editions that represent quite different reconstructions of his work.³⁶ After Synkellos, the most interesting case is Zonaras, who wrote a survey in eighteen books of Biblical and then (mostly) Roman history down to 1118. Zonaras relied extensively on Cassius Dio, and is treated as a main source for the

reconstitution of Dio's text. In addition to many ancient and Byzantine historians whom we can identify, it seems that Zonaras had other primary sources that have so far eluded identification, especially for the period of the later Roman empire and afterward. Some progress has now been made in this direction,³⁷ but we need more studies of Zonaras' working methods.³⁸ Unfortunately, he rarely names his sources, and neither does the old edition of his chronicle that we must use.

A unique text into which hundreds of stories from ancient history and literature were recycled was Ioannes Tzetzes' so-called *Histories*, or *Chiliades* (i.e., *Thousands* [of verses]). Tzetzes was a classicist, a teacher, and a scholar in twelfth-century Constantinople. He is discussed in [ch. 4](#), so there is no need for further detail here except to say that the *Histories* is a unique selection of verse paraphrases of ancient stories that are sometimes drawn from lost sources (even if those are not always easy to identify and were sometimes drawn from Tzetzes' memory).

We turn now to creative literary engagement with ancient historiography on the part of Byzantine writers, primarily historians. The (unfortunate) technical term for this in modern scholarship is "imitation," which is one way to translate *mimesis*, a term sometimes used in Byzantine rhetorical theory for the deliberate and close use of a classical literary model.³⁹ In a modern context, however, where originality is explicitly valorized, "imitation" has negative connotations which it could not have had in Byzantium. It thereby fails as an analytical category for it automatically traps what should be a process of literary analysis into a polarity of polemic ("Byzantine literature was unoriginal") and defensive rehabilitation: the response to the contemptuous and dismissive views of the past has been the half-way notion of "creative imitation," which still bears the scars of a modern polemic. A better description of what *mimesis* entailed would be something like "respectful valorization, creative engagement with, and inspiration by a classical model." Byzantine writers were never expected to eschew creativity in thought or expression, though obviously some were less creative than others in practice. *Mimesis* meant that they learned to address contemporary concerns or recount recent events within the parameters of linguistic expression and the narrative templates that were established as canonical by models that had already proven their durability and adaptability. Like any other approach to prose composition, this could be done more or less creatively, but there is no reason to prejudice the matter by inscribing it from the

start within the polarity imitation–originality. In fact, the correct appreciation of mimetic literature requires some intellectual and literary sophistication. It was not enough to merely identify the source and note it in an apparatus fontium (which by itself, in an era before computer databases, required formidable literary experience and attention to detail): the whole point was to draw the classical model in and make it complicit in the construction of a new “dialogic” meaning, whether by varying the details; alluding to aspects of it that one pointedly leaves out or gestures toward; reframing it in a new context so as to give the old narrative or saying a startling new significance; and so on. The Byzantines have a reputation for being overly subtle in many areas and for not being always direct in their dealing with others; it is a reputation that we should keep alive for them in the literary arena.

Looking now at historians “imitating” historians, Thucydides occupies a special position as a model in Byzantine writing, a position that no other ancient historian came close to achieving (though see below for Josephos). The reason is that by late antiquity, if not earlier, the *History* of Thucydides became a standard part of the curriculum in the schools of rhetoric, which provided the highest level of literary education for most men who had any.⁴⁰ Despite occasional criticisms of his obscurity and difficult style (see ch. 4), Thucydides, known simply as the Historian (ὁ συγγραφεύς) in the same way that Homer was just the Poet, took his place along Aristophanes, Euripides, Plato, and Demosthenes as a standard author and was regarded as an exemplar for speeches and narrative *ekphraseis* (descriptions of events, people, or objects), both of which were standard exercises in rhetorical training. Professors of rhetoric regarded him as a source for their discipline (though they had no interest in the Peloponnesian War as such) and he was regularly discussed in rhetorical manuals and commentaries. Most literary historians were the product of these schools and so their basic notions of what an appropriate historical speech sounded like, or an account of a siege, land or naval battle, or plague, was fundamentally indebted to Thucydides. Thus the prevalent *mimesis* of Thucydides in Byzantine historiography.

Yet overt *mimesis* of Thucydides did not have a continuous history.⁴¹ It is prevalent in the late antique authors of recent political and military history (i.e., Priskos, Prokopios, Agathias, and the like), but then recedes until the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when it makes a strong return in Ioannes Kantakouzenos (the retired emperor), Laonikos Chalkokondyles (the half-Herodotean and half-Thucydidean historian of Ottoman expansion), and Kritoboulos of Imbros (the

historian of Mehmet II).⁴² This does not mean that the educated elite were not reading Thucydides in the meantime; quite the contrary, there is evidence that knowledge of his *History* was taken for granted in the exchanges of educated men. Michael Choniates, bishop of Athens in the late twelfth century, assumes that his correspondent of course knows the plague narrative by heart.⁴³ But for a number of centuries in the middle Byzantine period historiography turned mostly to chronicles and imperial biographies, and it was not again until the fourteenth century that it revived certain ancient genres of historical writing (for example, ethnography and ambassadorial travel accounts).⁴⁴ Some historians during the intervening centuries still acknowledged that Thucydides was the normative paradigm for contemporary historiography. Michael Psellos (eleventh century) admits that he has not dated everything by season as did “the Historian.”⁴⁵ But he certainly knew his work, for in one of his lectures he explained a phrase about the Trinity in Orthodox theology by citing Thucydidean grammar.⁴⁶ Again, this knowledge came from the schools of grammar and rhetoric.

An ancient historian who may have given Thucydides a run for his money in terms of readership was Josephos, though obviously coming from an entirely different direction from the rhetorical schools.⁴⁷ The *Jewish Antiquities* reinforced Christian apologetics against the religious traditions of other ancient peoples and the *Jewish War* recounted the fulfillment of prophecies about the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem – a destruction, moreover, wrought by Romans, whose heirs and descendants were the Byzantines themselves. Josephos, therefore, was a valuable supplement or addendum to the sacred history found in the Bible, and he seems to have been read widely in religious circles as well as by historians. It is precisely because of this service that he performed for Byzantine Orthodoxy that we have the works of Josephos to begin with: pagans and Jews in antiquity itself seem to have been uninterested in what he had to say.

But Josephos was in a special category by himself. Among the secular historians, others too and not only Thucydides were read and studied for their style and approach to history. Xenophon was regarded as an exemplar of Attic eloquence and a model panegyrist (of Cyrus the Elder and Agesilaos). Herodotos was a standard author for Ionic prose and deemed by some a clearer and more entertaining historian than Thucydides (see [ch. 4](#)). Also, in the passage where Psellos disavows Thucydides’ chronological arrangement, he seems to indicate that he will follow the looser structure of Dionysios’ *Roman Antiquities*. And we

have seen how Cassius Dio was rewritten and followed by Byzantine historians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries interested in Roman history (Xiphilinos and Zonaras). How, then, were other ancient historians “creatively imitated” by their Byzantine heirs and counterparts? Answering that would be a book in itself, and much of the material has yet to be identified and studied closely, so I will offer some general considerations.

A good place to start is at the beginning, with the historians’ prefaces. A preface was a place not only for defining the theme of the work and the approach that each historian will bring to it, but also for defending the writing of history in general and explaining its benefits to society. A repertoire of useful tropes and arguments had built up since antiquity which Byzantine historians drew on liberally and recast to suit their own particular circumstances. Each preface, of course, must be studied in tandem with the work that it prefaces,⁴⁸ but there is scope for additional studies of the Byzantine prefaces from a more diachronic, comparative, and intertextual perspective.⁴⁹ Prokopios adopted the preface of Dionysios’ *Roman Antiquities* for his *Buildings*, the quasi-historical panegyric of Justinian.⁵⁰ But it was the long and rich preface of Diodoros of Sicily, who gives many arguments for writing history, that proved most successful. It was mined by both Prokopios and Agathias in the sixth century and by Niketas Choniates in the early thirteenth. Niketas, we now know, owned a manuscript of Diodoros to which he added marginal comments in epigram form (see [ch. 5](#)). The preface of Agathias was imitated by Leon the Deacon in the late tenth century, and so on: an interlinked genealogy of prefatory tropes can be mapped from classical antiquity down to the end of Byzantium, to the generation of Laonikos and Kritoboulos.

Herodotos was probably just as much read as Thucydides, though less imitated in terms of his literary style and narrative approach. His reception will prove more difficult to trace because his *Histories* was a repository of famous stories, emblematic personages, and moralizing tales that were known and cited widely, beyond the genre of historiography. Moreover, he had contributed two important templates to Byzantine thinking about foreign people in his distinctive accounts of the Persians and Skythians, which were abstracted and applied to many subsequent peoples. For Romans living under a monarchy, the Persian type was useful for thinking about absolutism gone wrong, whereas the Skythian type represented the opposite extreme of apolitical, uncivilized, and nomadic life. Herodotean elements are more visible in the late antique historians’ writing

about Roman–Persian wars, but it was not until after the end of Byzantium that Laonikos Chalkokondyles, a native Athenian, decided to produce a new version of Herodotos for his own world, replete with ethnographies.⁵¹

Other ancient historians were cleverly used too by their Byzantine heirs. Such uses of Xenophon are discussed in [ch. 1](#). In ca. 500 AD, the last openly pagan historian of antiquity, Zosimos, reversed the narrative model of Polybios in order to write not about how the Romans conquered the world in fifty-three years, but about how they lost their empire in that amount of time.⁵² Michael Attaleiates, writing about the imperial decline of the eleventh century, seems to have used Polybios in a similar way.⁵³ Scholars have argued that some imperial biographies of the middle period were based on Plutarch’s *Lives*, especially those of bad rulers (Demetrios and Nero), which provided useful templates for political invective.⁵⁴ Conversely, a panegyrical history of the Balkan campaign of Ioannes I Tzimizkes (in 971) drew directly on Plutarch’s *Life of Camillus* and other histories of ancient Rome in order to cast the emperor as a hero in a Roman mold.⁵⁵ According to one argument, Psellos based his account of Konstantinos VIII (1025–1028) on Herodian’s account of the reign of Commodus – both rulers standing at the head of a period of decline after the “golden years” of their predecessors.⁵⁶ The chronicler Symeon based his account of the reconquest of Crete by Nikephoros Phokas in 961 directly on Prokopios’ account of the reconquest of North Africa by Belisarios in 533–534.⁵⁷

Many more such instances of creative adaptation remain to be discovered. Through them we may understand better how classical historiography shaped its Byzantine continuations, just as Byzantine views and interests in history created the shape and contents of the canon of classical historiography that we have.

NOTES

- ¹ The bibliography is vast. See the challenging paper by Batstone, ‘Provocation,’ and the volume of which it is a part; for the Byzantine case, see now Jeffreys, ‘We need to talk about Byzantium.’
- ² Alexandria: Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*; Rome: Spawforth, *Greece and the Augustan Revolution*.
- ³ Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 19–20.
- ⁴ For Sappho, see Pontani, ‘Le cadavre adoré.’
- ⁵ Dimou and Pétrides, ‘La redécouverte de Delphes protobyzantine’; Scott, *Delphi*, 246–248.
- ⁶ Kaldellis, *The Christian Parthenon*.
- ⁷ This is a thesis presented by J. Elsner and myself at the symposium of the exhibition *Heaven and Earth*:

Perspectives on Greece's Byzantium, organized by the J. Paul Getty museum and UCLA (on 2 May 2014); for the collections of Constantinople, see Bassett, *The Urban Image*.

- 8 For surveys, see Kaldellis, 'Classical Scholarship,' 11–13; Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*.
- 9 Kaldellis, 'The Byzantine Role.'
- 10 Kennedy and Kaldellis, 'Thucydides in Byzantium.'
- 11 For some of the most important studies by author, see Friis-Jensen, Olsen, and Smith, 'Bibliography of Classical Scholarship.'
- 12 Kennedy and Kaldellis, 'Thucydides in Byzantium.'
- 13 Pérez Martín, 'The Reception of Xenophon.'
- 14 Kaldellis, *A New Herodotos*.
- 15 Jeffreys, 'The Attitudes of Byzantine Chronicles.'
- 16 Kaldellis, 'The Classicism of Procopius.'
- 17 Kaldellis, 'The Byzantine Role,' 75, 77, 79.
- 18 Prokopios, *Wars* 2.12.29.
- 19 Josephos, *Jewish Antiquities* 18.3.3. The bibliography on this issue is vast. For Eusebios, his three citations of the *Testimonium*, and possible forgery of it, see Olson, 'Eusebius and the *Testimonium Flavianum*.'
- 20 See Wilson, 'A Chapter'; *Scholars of Byzantium*, 33–36, 136–142; 'Scolia e commentatori'; and 'The Relation of Text and Commentary'; also Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 11–17 (and passim for the scholia on each author). For a list of published scholia, see Friis-Jensen, Olsen, and Smith, 'Bibliography of Classical Scholarship,' 215–226.
- 21 For now see Efthymiades, φώτιος Πατριρχης.
- 22 For the *Bibliothèque* in general, see Treadgold, *The Nature of the Bibliotheca*; Schamp, *Photios historien des lettres*; and for historiography specifically, Mendels, 'Greek and Roman History'; Schamp, 'La réception de l'histoire'; and Croke, 'Tradition and Originality.'
- 23 Kaldellis, 'The Byzantine Role,' 79, 83.
- 24 See esp. the papers in Zecchini, ed., *Il lessico Suda*; and Vanotti, ed., *Il lessico Suda*; also Roberto, 'Note sulla memoria.'
- 25 Kaldellis, 'The Works and Days of Hesychios'; and many of the papers in Vanotti, ed., *Il lessico Suda*.
- 26 Cf. Treadgold, *The Nature of the Bibliotheca*, 31–32, with Schamp, *Photios historien des lettres*.
- 27 Amidon, *Philostorgius*.
- 28 Arrian: Bravi, *L'Epitome di Santa Croce*; for Polybios, see Moore, *The Manuscript Tradition*; for Ephraim's Polybios, see Perria, 'Un nuovo codice di Efrem'; and Prato, 'Il monaco Efrem.'
- 29 Mallan, 'The Style, Method, and Programme.'
- 30 Luttrell, 'Greek Histories'; Iglesias-Zoido, *El legado de Tucídides* 144, 148, 153.
- 31 Pérez Martín, 'The Reception of Xenophon,' 852–854.
- 32 For brief and accessible introductions, see Kaldellis, 'Classical Scholarship,' 11–13; Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 91–92; and 'Classical Scholarship.' The standard reference survey, now a bit outdated, is Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur*, v. 2, 33–50.
- 33 Tsantsanoglou, *New Fragments*, 43–46, 99.
- 34 For surveys of Byzantine historiography, author by author, see Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur*; Karpozilos, Βυζαντινοὶ ἱστορικοὶ (ongoing); and Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* and *The Middle Byzantine Historians* (also an ongoing survey). For a brief introduction, see Kaldellis, 'The Corpus of Byzantine Historiography.'
- 35 Croke, 'Malalas, the Man and his Work,' 17–25; Jeffreys, 'Malalas' Sources,' 169, 211–214; and Treadgold, 'The Byzantine World Histories.' I am convinced by Treadgold about the full extent of the invented sources (glimpsed already by Croke and Jeffreys), but remain non-committal on the question of Eustathios of Epiphaneia. Moreover, most scholars have not yet understood the ludic aspect of the

Chronicle.

- 36 See the attempt to mediate by van Nuffelen, 'John of Antioch.'
- 37 Banchich and Lane, *The History of Zonaras*, esp. in the notes. Banchich's expected volume (in this series) on Petros *patrikos* and the anonymous continuator of Cassius Dio should shed more light on this issue.
- 38 Grigoriadis, *Linguistic and Literary Studies*, made a promising start, before his untimely death.
- 39 The standard survey of this issue is Hunger, 'On the Imitation (ΜΙΜΗΣΙΣ) of Antiquity'; while it is not prejudicial, it avoids questions of literary interpretation, or rather seems unaware that they might be posed to Byzantine literature.
- 40 For history in the late antique rhetorical curriculum, see Gibson, 'Learning Greek History'; for Thucydides, Kennedy and Kaldellis, 'Thucydides in Byzantium,' and Kaldellis, 'The Classicism of Prokopios.'
- 41 Astutely noted by Reinsch, 'Byzantine Adaptations.'
- 42 I cite sample studies; for Priskos, see Blockley, 'Dexippus and Priscus'; for Prokopios, Kaldellis, *Procopius*; and Meier, 'Prokop, Agathias, die Pest'; for Agathias, Adshead, 'Thucydides and Agathias.' For the later Byzantine historians, see Reinsch, 'Byzantine Adaptations'; Kennedy and Kaldellis, 'Thucydides in Byzantium'; and, for Laonikos specifically, Kaldellis, *A New Herodotos*.
- 43 Michael Choniates, *Letter* 32.
- 44 Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity*.
- 45 Psellos, *Chronographia* 6.73.
- 46 Psellos, *Theologica I*, p. 79 (op. 20).
- 47 In general, see Bowman, 'Josephus in Byzantium.'
- 48 For the case of Agathias, see Kaldellis, 'The Historical and Religious Views.'
- 49 The only survey is still that by Lieberich, *Studien zu den Proömien*.
- 50 Cesaretti, 'All'ombra di una preterizione.'
- 51 Kaldellis, *A New Herodotos*.
- 52 Paschoud, 'Influences et échos'; and see [ch. 3](#).
- 53 Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, 52–70.
- 54 Jenkins, 'Constantine VII's Portrait' and 'The Classical Background'; cf. Alexander, 'Secular Biography.'
- 55 Kaldellis, 'The Original Source.'
- 56 Johnson, 'Constantine VIII and Michael Psellos.'
- 57 Kaldellis, 'The Byzantine Conquest of Crete.'

XENOPHON IN BYZANTIUM AND THE CODED POEM FOR LEON VI

Scholars are only now reconstructing the reception of Xenophon's historical works in Byzantium.¹ This process must eventually encompass his manuscript tradition, the occasional scholia, and references in Byzantine literature to him and to his characters and topics. In antiquity and Byzantium, he was admired as a master of clear Attic prose, so his works may have survived more as rhetorical models than because of any interest in the events they recount. Xenophon was also an important source for lexicography and collections of moral maxims, and his historical works were likely not the ones most read. In the early fourteenth century, the statesman and philosopher Theodoros Metochites wrote an essay *On Xenophon* that deals with him as a writer and Socratic philosopher, so mostly with the *Memorabilia* and not the historical works.² The *Education of Cyrus*, on the other hand, provided models and material for the genre of Byzantine imperial panegyrics. Handbooks for such speeches explicitly recommended using Cyrus as a model for praising emperors, and historically minded panegyrists and panegyric historians did just that.³ For example, Ioannes Kinnamos, the historian of the emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180), began his *History* as follows:

The task of historical writing was not deemed dishonorable by those who were wise in ancient times. Many of them even became highly esteemed thereby. One of them admitted into history the deeds of the Hellenes, another described the training of Cyrus from childhood and the deeds which were achieved by him when he reached manhood.⁴

In this way Kinnamos established a lofty standard against which to evaluate and praise the emperor Manuel.

At least two Byzantine historians made more subtle use of Xenophon as a tacit referent that gave their narratives additional and possibly subversive layers. Prokopios, in his account of the wars of Justinian (527–565), modeled his account of the debate between the defeated Vandal king Gelimer and the imperial officer Fara over the question of whether Gelimer should exchange his now worthless “freedom” and accept the “slavery” of submission to Justinian on the account in Xenophon’s *Hellenika* of the effort by the Spartan king Agesilaos to persuade the Persian Pharnabazos to leave his slavery to the Persian king and become free.⁵ It is a cleverly executed reversal, constructed out of subtle allusions, that quietly undermines Justinian’s propaganda of liberation in North Africa. Agesilaos, the Spartan king, comes to free the subjects of Persia from their despotism, whereas Justinian comes to impose his own Roman-style despotism on everyone.⁶ The second historian who made subtle use of Xenophon’s historical works was the greatest historian in the Byzantine tradition after Prokopios, Niketas Choniates (d. ca. 1217). He modeled the opening words and scene of his narrative of the decline of Byzantium in the twelfth century on the opening of the *Anabasis*. Just as Xenophon began with family strife at the Persian court, Choniates does the same with the succession struggle of 1118, alluding directly to the wording of the *Anabasis*. He thus points to infighting among the ruling Komnenoi family as a major cause of the problem of decline and also hints at the unheroic character of his tale in comparison to the otherwise triumphant and martial narrative told by Xenophon.⁷

Writers in other genres, including Church Fathers, could make equally sophisticated use of Xenophon’s non-historical works, especially for moralizing purposes. None other than St Basileios of Kaisareia, in his widely read *Address to Young Men on How They Might Profit from Greek Literature*, used the ‘Choice of Herakles’ recounted in the *Memorabilia* as a model for thinking about virtuous action.⁸ In concluding this survey, I would like to draw attention to a passage from a late Roman author that has not received the attention it deserves. This author is Eunapios (d. after 405). He wrote a lost *History* of the late third and fourth centuries with strong pagan, anti-Christian bent, from which extensive fragments survive, and also a work on the *Lives of Philosophers and Sophists* of that same period. This work has received extensive attention as a source for the social history and biographical profiles of pagan intellectuals in what was

becoming a Christian empire. Yet little to no attention has been devoted to its opening, which is surprising given the metaphysical interests of most of the intellectuals whom Eunapios discusses. This is how the *Lives* begins:

Xenophon the philosopher was the only one among philosophers who adorned philosophy through both words and deeds. As for words, there are his literary works that treat moral virtue; in deeds, moreover, he was outstanding, and gave rise to future generals through his own example (for example, Alexander the Great would not have become Great if it were not for Xenophon).⁹ He¹⁰ claims that the nonessential deeds of illustrious men should also be written down. But in this work I will not deal with the nonessential deeds of illustrious men, but precisely with their main deeds.¹¹

Scholars of Eunapios have yet to explain (or to wonder) why he would draw readers' attention to the warlike deeds of Xenophon (the general) and Alexander the Great at the outset of a work dedicated to the mostly uneventful lives of professors and philosophers. However, Eunapios himself does not seem to think that his subjects were lacking on the "deeds" side of the ledger. He says that his work, the *Lives*, will deal precisely with their deeds (*erga*), and does not highlight them as men of *logos*. The *logoi-erga* distinction that he makes in the case of Xenophon may not strictly refer to "words" versus "deeds" but possibly to "discourses about virtue" versus "accounts of virtuous actions," both of which can be found in the works of Xenophon. On this reading, Alexander was inspired not by Xenophon's personal feats but by his narratives of them (and of the deeds of others). Among all philosophers, then, Xenophon was not only the one with the most action under his belt; he was the one who wrote about warfare the most too.

However, the conventional reading of the distinction between *logoi* and *erga* is words versus actual (not narrated) deeds, and the reference to Alexander would steer readers' mind in this direction all the more. There is a martial tone to the opening of the *Lives*, and Xenophon was well known as the emergent general of the *Anabasis*. In that text, an army led into Mesopotamia against a Persian king is stranded after the slaughter of its leadership and Xenophon is one of the men who led it out victoriously. The story could not but have resonated with readers in the fourth century. In 363, the emperor Julian, who was also the shining hero of Eunapios' *History*, led an army into Mesopotamia, was killed in battle, and left his forces stranded there. Eunapios seems to have compared the death of Julian to

that of Alexander, who left “the Macedonian army like the blinded Cyclops.”¹² The Roman army had to choose a new leader, but Eunapios stressed that there was no way they could find a new Julian, and they knew it.¹³ Eventually, they were led out by Jovian, but only after he had signed an ignominious peace with Persia, amounting to a surrender. This was a story told in detail by Eunapios in his *History*, and by numerous other contemporary historians (such as Ammianus Marcellinus). The story of the *Anabasis* could not but have resonated with this disaster, but what did Eunapios intend by the allusion in the preface to the *Lives*, if he intended one at all (which we cannot know for certain)? An indictment of contemporary leaders through comparison with heroes of the past? There was no philosophical Xenophon to lead the Romans out of Persia, after the philosopher-king Julian had led them into it.

Julian was, of course, famously eager to emulate Alexander the Great, in his own invasion of Persia above all. But he also believed that philosophy was more important than conquest. This leads to a final piece of evidence which suggests that Eunapios was thinking of Julian when he started the *Lives* with a tribute to Xenophon. In one of his many literary works, which were read by his later fans such as Eunapios, Julian argued that Sokrates (here called “the son of Sophroniskos”) was more important than Alexander. Here is how he put it: “the son of Sophroniskos performed greater tasks than Alexander, for to him I ascribe the wisdom of Plato, the generalship of Xenophon,” and the feats of others (we recall that in the *Anabasis*, it is Sokrates whom Xenophon consults before setting out to join Cyrus).¹⁴ This is the very same type of anagogic thinking that we find echoed in the preface of Eunapios’ *Lives*, which extends it logic. Therefore, if Alexander was made possible by Xenophon, and Julian by Alexander, we have a nice genealogy of influence stretching from Sokrates to Julian through Xenophon and Alexander.

In the next section we will consider a brief poem from the late ninth or early tenth century which also reveals how Byzantine authors used discussions of Xenophon to encode reflections on contemporary figures and events.

THE POEM AS FROM XENOPHON AND ITS CODED MESSAGE

Parisinus gr. 1640 dates from around 1320 and contains Xenophon’s *Education of Cyrus* (ff. 1–123) and *Anabasis* (ff. 124–205). Between the two texts (f. 123v) is an anonymous iambic poem addressed to a learned emperor Leon, who can only be

Leon VI (886–912), known as “the Wise” already during his reign.¹⁵ This book is therefore a copy of one originally dedicated to that emperor. So far most scholars have assumed that the original also contained both texts, but Pérez Martín has proposed that it may have contained only the *Anabasis*, on the grounds that the dedicatory poem would not have been placed in the middle but at the start.¹⁶ This is a cogent observation. The poem, however, refers to both Cyrus the Elder and Cyrus the Younger in the context of Xenophon’s works (see below). So either the poet assumed that the emperor would already know the *Education of Cyrus* when he presented him with a copy of the *Anabasis*, or the *Education of Cyrus* was in fact included in the original gift. Perhaps the copyists of 1320 switched the order of the texts to put them in chronological order, leaving the poem in the middle.

The poem was published by A. Hug in 1878 and again by A. Markopoulos in 1994 (see *Anonymous Poem Addressed to Leon VI* in the bibliography). It was the subject of a detailed reading by M. Lauxtermann in 2003, who translated most of it in the course of his exposition. A complete new translation is provided here.

1. Nothing is pleasant quite like an ancient text,
crammed full of Attic eloquence,
that speaks the truth clearly and
depicts how things are in life;
5. it teaches the wise and makes them even wiser
about the things that must be done in life.
It bestows manliness and readiness
and helps one to think reliably.
It makes the young old over time,
10. through the knowledge of antiquity.
Speak up, Xenophon, and support my claim!
The argument is addressed to the lord
Leon, the shining splendor of the state,
who is exploring the most ancient writings
15. and gathering from them worldly experience;
he is the eye of the entire world.¹⁷
For, looking upon Cyrus here, the Younger,
deploying the ten thousand as his shield and
taking up arms against the elder Cyrus,

20. who would not instantly see what a disaster the lust for power is?
Impelled by anger and bitterness,
throbbing violently and rushing across without purpose,
his wild charge got him killed in battle.¹⁸
It seems to me that Klearchos, the famous Spartan,
25. caused everything to fail when he lost his nerve,
ruining Cyrus' wise plan.
Let us then make a modest prayer
for our pearly and wise crowned lord,
may he rule successfully as sole emperor
30. for many cycles of peaceful years.

Some historical background is necessary before we try to unravel the string of allusions and covert identifications made in this poem. Leon was the second emperor of the Macedonian dynasty, which had been founded in a series of bloody coups by his father Basileios I (867–886), a man of humble origins in the region of Macedonia but apparently formidable physique. The last of his victims was his benefactor, the last emperor of the previous “Amorian” dynasty Michael III (841–867), whose former mistress Eudokia Basileios actually married. Leon was the oldest son of Basileios and Eudokia, so of course there were rumors that he was actually the son of Michael III, but that scandal is not relevant to understanding the poem. Basileios and Leon had a falling out in the mid 880s, which caused the heir to be imprisoned for up to three years (see below), but Leon was released in time to succeed his father in 886. He reigned until 912 with his younger brother Alexandros as nominal co-emperor. There was apparently tension between the two brothers, but no open rupture. Leon was a prolific scholar-emperor and his reign was generally peaceful and successful, except that in 904 the major city of Thessalonike was sacked by Arab marauders and slavers, and then in 911 the Roman fleet under the command of admiral Himerios suffered another defeat at the hands of the Arabs. Alexandros succeeded Leon in 912–913, whereupon power devolved into a series of regencies governing on behalf of Leon's young son Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos (913–959) – but that is a story for the next chapter.

Let us turn now to the poem. Markopoulos argued that at the court of the first Macedonian emperors – this was the dynasty founded by Basileios I, the father of Leon VI – oriental history was tied to dynastic propaganda. Without realizing that the poem is written in code, he linked the manuscript of Xenophon given to

Leon to the extravagant genealogies concocted for Basileios by some members of the court, presumably to counter the taint of his notoriously humble birth.¹⁹ A hostile author reports in the 910s that when the deposed patriarch Photios was trying to win back the emperor Basileios' favor in the mid 870s, he made up a false story connecting that emperor to Tiridates, the fourth-century king of Armenia who according to tradition first converted to Christianity in the time of Constantine the Great. Photios allegedly wrote this on a papyrus and in an old script and had a learned associate place it in the imperial library, where it was subsequently "discovered."²⁰ Then, in 888, in his funeral oration for his parents Basileios and Eudokia, Leon himself had claimed that his father was descended from the Arsacids and explained that they in turn were descended from Artaxerxes II, who had a very long reign (404–358 BC).²¹ This was precisely the Artaxerxes against whom Cyrus the Younger rebels in the *Anabasis* (though Leon does not make this connection in his funeral oration). In the mid tenth century, Basileios' grandson Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos commissioned a biography of his grandfather which ascribed to him a genealogy that included not only the Armenian Arsacids but Alexander and Constantine the Great.²² Markopoulos concludes that the original manuscript of Xenophon might have been ordered by Leon in order to further his interest in what was basically his own family history, while the *Education of Cyrus* provided a template for the idealized praise of a model ruler.²³

This might well be the case, but there is more going on in this poem than straightforward dynastic propaganda. There are two glaring problems in the second half, where the poet explicates the lessons that Leon might learn from studying the works of Xenophon. First, the poet accuses Cyrus the Younger of a lust for rule, but has him attack not his brother Artaxerxes but rather Cyrus the Elder, an absurdity. Second, it then claims that the whole project was foiled by Klearchos' lack of daring, which undermined "Cyrus' wise plan." The poem is, then, inconsistent in its evaluation of Cyrus the Younger, who goes from being reckless to wise. The tendency among nineteenth-century scholars (including, in this case, Hug, the editor of the poem) was to blame all this on the Byzantines' manifest stupidity. But this is itself a lazy reaction. The poet was informed about Xenophon's works, and had likely just copied them both out. Moreover, we now know that Byzantine authors liked to discuss contemporary figures and events in esoteric terms coded to the Bible or to classical literature. A notorious example of this style is found in a speech given in 927, so not long after Leon's death, whose

topic is a peace treaty recently made with the Bulgarians. The speech rehearses the history of the Byzantines, the Bulgarians, and their leaders under the guise of Biblical and classical parallels.²⁴ However tedious we may find such decryption, to understand these works we have to puzzle out their system of references. It is likely, moreover, that we will not attain consensus; codes, after all, are not meant to be immediately transparent.

Lauxtermann offered an ingenious solution to the first problem (though he did not notice the second). Leon had a brother, Alexandros, who, like Leon, had been crowned junior co-emperor by their father Basileios I before the latter's death in 886 (Leon in 870, Alexandros in 879). The two brothers were not on good terms, though Alexandros remained a nominal co-emperor throughout Leon's reign and even took the throne for a year after Leon's death (912–913), reversing some of his brother's personnel decisions.²⁵ Lauxtermann suggested that Cyrus' name, *Kyros* in Greek, evoked the Byzantine words for power and the holder of power (*kyros*, *kyrios*). Thus, Cyrus the Elder and Cyrus the Younger are code for the senior and junior emperor respectively, Leon and Alexandros. The poem is actually about an attack by Alexandros on Leon, motivated by a lust for power. While no such attack is securely attested,²⁶ it is certainly conceivable that Leon feared one. Lauxtermann then points out that the Spartan general Klearchos was, before he took up service under Cyrus the Younger, the governor of none other than the city of Byzantion, so this is a covert reference to a "Byzantine" general. One such who showed notable "lack of daring" at a critical point in Leon's reign was the admiral Himerios, who failed to defeat an Arab fleet at a critical moment and thereby enabled their capture and sack of Thessalonike in 904.²⁷

But there are problems with this interpretation. No collaboration between Alexandros and Himerios is attested during Leon's reign, and in fact Alexandros would imprison him in 912 when he came to the throne.²⁸ Himerios seems to have a loyalist of Leon. Second, to make his decoding of Klearchos and Himerios work, Lauxtermann must assume that the "wise plan of Cyrus" in v. 26 refers to Leon, not Alexandros; in other words, the referent has suddenly changed: Cyrus the Younger here becomes Leon. But the syntax of the poem does not allow that: it is clear that Klearchos' lack of daring frustrated the wise plan of Cyrus. Thus, Lauxtermann must assume not only that the referent changes, but that the wise plan of this (new) Cyrus (= Leon) had nothing to do with the rivalry between the two Cyruses, for Himerios' failure to defeat the Arabs in 904 had nothing to do with any plan by Alexandros. Finally, as Pérez Martín notes, the poem praises

Attic eloquence because it makes the young as wise as the old (v. 9), which seems to refer to Leon's youth. But in 904, when Himerios was defeated by the Arabs, Leon was 38 years old. Pérez Martín accepts Lauxtermann's identification of the two Cyruses but dates this allusion to the potential tension between them to 886, when Leon first took the throne and the two heirs were sorting things out.²⁹

There is a different way to decipher the poem. The whole point of it, after all, is to convey a useful moral lesson from Xenophon to Leon, the sort of thing that makes a young man old. To hint at Leon's brother's lust for power does not morally improve Leon. It is more likely that *Leon* is the one at the center of the story about the lust for power in a way, perhaps, that implies he was susceptible to that vice. When the key question is posed in verses 17–20, it seems at first to be only about the historical figure of Cyrus the Younger, but the reader (or the live audience) quickly become perplexed when his enemy is then said to be Cyrus the Elder. We can rule out the condescending interpretation that the Byzantines did not know how historically false this was. We are dealing with an error so blatant and huge that it must have signaled to them that the poem had moved outside the world of factual history as presented in Xenophon's works. The characters of Xenophon were being rearranged to convey a different message. This jolt forces the reader to start thinking about what is going on. Xenophon himself had set an interesting precedent for this: he signals that the *Education of Cyrus* is not taking place precisely in the historical world by saying in the preface that Cyrus the Elder conquered Egypt.³⁰ When these disruptive elements occur, we realize that we have a code to crack. Lauxtermann postulates junior and senior "Cyruses," i.e., emperors. But what if we shift this up by a generation, making Leon's *father* (Basileios I) the elder Cyrus? The poem in fact calls this person "the first Cyrus," and Basileios was the founder of his imperial dynasty just like Cyrus was. When Leon's son Konstantinos VII commissioned the biography of Basileios in the mid tenth century, stories about Cyrus the Elder (from Herodotos and other classical sources) provided one of the templates on which this quasi-mythical narrative was based.³¹

As it happens, Leon, Basileios' designated heir, was implicated in some kind of conspiracy against his father in the early 880s, for which he had been arrested and imprisoned for a substantial time, between one and three years, most likely the latter. He was released only after others intervened on his behalf, just in time for him to succeed Basileios a month later (in 886).³² At that time, Leon was only 20 years old, an age suitable for the reference made in the poem to his youth (v.

9). If the poem were composed in those circumstances, an allusion to Cyrus the Younger's attack, driven by a lust for power, on a relative who is not his brother (as in the *Anabasis*) but a more senior "Cyrus" could be a coded reference to a plot by Leon against Basileios. In fact, the poem could even have been composed after Leon's release but before the death of Basileios.

Unfortunately, while the fact of Leon's imprisonment is not in doubt, our sources for the plot itself are meager, and mostly late or embellished. As a result, we cannot securely identify "Klearchos," the instrument of Leon's attack against Basileios whose "lack of daring" foiled the plan. We can retain Lauxtermann's clever suggestion that "Klearchos" refers to a "Byzantine general," but avoid one of the main challenges facing his interpretation (namely that "Klearchos" is being criticized for an event unrelated to the conflict between the two Cyruses). There was some Klearchos-figure implicated in the plot of Leon against Basileios, and contemporaries would surely have known his identity. Unfortunately, we know few men from this decade and there is no guarantee that "Klearchos" is among them. Nevertheless, I do have a specific suggestion. The poem does not actually draw attention to the fact that Klearchos had been governor of Byzantium, but it does call him a "famous Spartan." The tenth-century *Chronicle* of Symeon the Logothete does identify a few men by name among a group of unnamed others who were all punished or exiled for siding with Leon in his plot (whatever that had been). The one to whom it pays the most attention was Niketas Helladikos, a *protovestiarios* (a Byzantine court rank).³³ He belonged to a family whose history and strong Greek connections (*Helladikoi* came to mean "from mainland Greece") has now been examined by Ilias Anagnostakis, who argues that its origins were specifically Peloponnesian.³⁴ Another member of this family was the early tenth-century author and politician Niketas (Helladikos) *magistros*, who married into the family of the emperor Romanos I (920–944). This Niketas repeatedly claims in his letters that on his father's side (whence, presumably, his family name) he was a Spartan.³⁵ It is possible, then, that Leon's conspirator Niketas the *protovestiarios* was a Spartan, hence the allusion in the poem and the comparison to Klearchos.

One more problem remains, however, namely that the plan of Cyrus the Younger (= Leon), which Klearchos foiled through inaction, is called "wise" in v. 26 of the poem. In the *Anabasis*, Klearchos refuses to obey Cyrus' order during the battle to cut across the lines and attack King Artaxerxes directly.³⁶ Why is the plan called wise after Leon has already been reproached for it (and for his

“lust for power”) earlier in the poem?

It is possible that the adjective “wise” is being used ironically here. “For all your vaunted wisdom,” it would then be saying to Leon known as the Wise, “you still made that terrible mistake.” This reading would mean, first, that Leon was already being called wise (just) before his reign and, second, that someone was in a position to speak to him so boldly in 886. The first is not a problem, as Leon was already one of the most highly educated imperial heirs in Byzantine history. Basileios I had made sure of that: Photios himself had been the prince’s tutor at one point,³⁷ and Leon would go on to publish more texts under his name than any past Roman or Byzantine emperor (we will discuss some of them again in the following chapter, because they set the tone for the literary activities of his son, Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos). The second point is also not a great problem. For one thing, we must not forget that the irony, along with the entire message of the poem, is written in code, and is therefore discreet. If Leon had just been released from prison, he might have been in a chastened mood, especially if his father was still around and calling the shots at the court. We also happen to possess a pair of moralizing works addressed to him as if by Basileios I himself, which scholars suspect were written by Photios on the old emperor’s behalf.³⁸ They are usually classified as “Mirrors of Princes” and give Leon moral advice similar to that in the poem.³⁹ This was a period when the prince was probably being advised from many quarters.

However we interpret the poem, we are dealing here with an esoteric conversation at the Byzantine court couched in the form of a subtle code whose decryption requires a solid knowledge of two of Xenophon’s historical texts. Glaring “mistakes” were hardly due to the Byzantines’ stupidity, but rather the contrary: they called on the reader to go beyond the text, recombining its terms so as to grasp a nuanced contemporary message.

NOTES

- 1 For the Macedonian period, see now Pérez Martín, ‘The Reception of Xenophon’; for the factors behind his survival, see Kaldellis, ‘The Byzantine Role,’ 80–81. For the partial and preliminary publication of scholia on the *Anabasis*, see Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship*, 55.
- 2 Theodoros Metochites, *Essays* 20: *On Xenophon*.
- 3 Markopoulos, ‘Ἀποσημειώσεις,’ 196 on the recommendations of Menandros Rhetor (late third century); cf. Prokopios, *Buildings* 1.1.12–16, on which Kaldellis, *Procopius*, 51–54.
- 4 Ioannes Kinnamos, *History* 1.1.
- 5 Pazdernik, ‘Xenophon’s *Hellenica* in Procopius’ *Wars*.’

- 6 Kaldellis, 'Prokopios' *Vandal War*.'
- 7 Kaldellis, 'Niketas Choniates,' 78.
- 8 See the astute study by Fortin, 'Basil the Great and the Choice of Hercules.'
- 9 McGroarty, 'Did Alexander the Great Read Xenophon?'
- 10 Presumably Xenophon, unless there is a lacuna between this sentence and the previous one.
- 11 Eunapios, *Lives* 1.1 (452–453).
- 12 Eunapios, *History* fr. 34.10.
- 13 Eunapios, *History* fr. 28.1. It was at this point in his *History* (fr. 28.6) that Eunapios makes a statement on not including trivial matters in a formal history, similar to the point that he makes in the preface to the *Lives* under discussion here. I thank Tom Banchich and Bob Penella for their advice on this perplexing passage.
- 14 Julian, *Letter to Themistios* 264c.
- 15 Mango, 'The Legend of Leo the Wise'; Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, ch. 5.
- 16 Pérez Martín, 'The Reception of Xenophon,' 823–824.
- 17 This was a conventional way of referring to the emperor or to Constantinople.
- 18 Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.8.24–29.
- 19 Markopoulos, 'Ἀποσημειώσεις,' 196–197.
- 20 Niketas David, *Life of Ignatios* 89–90; cf. Cavallo, 'ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΑ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΙΝΑ.' For the political context of Photios' activities at this time, see Vlysidou, 'Ἐξωτερικὴ πολιτικὴ,' 113–121.
- 21 Leon VI, *Homily* 14.126–139; see Odorico, 'La politica dell'immaginario.'
- 22 Konstantinos VII, *Life of Basileios I* 2–3; in general, see Moravcsik, 'Sagen und Legenden.'
- 23 Markopoulos, 'Ἀποσημειώσεις,' 196–197. The *Education of Cyrus* was used in Konstantinos VII's historical *Excerpta*: see the next chapter.
- 24 Dujčev, 'On the Treaty of 927.' For another striking example from the fourth century, see Blockley, 'The Coded Message in Ammianus.'
- 25 Karlin-Hayter, 'The Emperor Alexander's Bad Name.' The question of Leon's actual biological parentage is irrelevant here. He and everyone else treated Basileios I as his father. See Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, ch. 2.
- 26 Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 225–227.
- 27 Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, 210–212. Pace 208, wishes for the emperor's longevity were probably a daily occurrence in Byzantium (see the *Book of Ceremonies*, throughout), so they cannot be used to link this poem chronologically to any other text with such a wish. The exact same wish for Leon, in the same language, is made in a retroactive prayer by Saint Konstantinos the Former Jew; see Markopoulos, 'Ἀποσημειώσεις,' 200 for the context.
- 28 Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 233.
- 29 Pérez Martín, 'The Reception of Xenophon,' 825–828.
- 30 Xenophon, *Education of Cyrus* 1.1.4. Cf. Gruen, *Diaspora*, 144–145, 151, 162–163, 169: blatant historical errors in texts that we would be inclined to classify as romances do in fact serve the purpose of signaling to the reader that the story should not be taken as history.
- 31 Konstantinos VII, *Life of Basileios I* 8.8, where Cyrus is mentioned; in general, see Moravcsik, 'Sagen und Legenden'; and Jenkins, 'The Classical Background,' 19.
- 32 Vlysidou, 'Ἐξωτερικὴ πολιτικὴ,' 171–189; Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 57–60; van Bochove, *To Date and Not to Date*, 8–13.
- 33 Symeon the Logothete, *Chronicle* 132.23 (p. 268).
- 34 Anagnostakis, 'Ἑλλαδικὰ παραμύθια.'
- 35 Niketas, *Letters* 2, 4, and 5. The editor of these letters, Westerink, inferred from another letter that he was born at Larissa, while granting that the family was Peloponnesian (p. 24). But Pratsch, 'Zur Herkunft des Niketas,' and Anagnostakis read the letters correctly: Niketas was a Spartan by birth.

- 36 Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.8.12–14. This is sufficient to justify the poet’s characterization, whether it is fair to Klearchos or not. We do not need to conclude, with Pérez Martín, ‘The Reception of Xenophon,’ 827, that the poet was following Plutarch, *Artaxerxes* 8.2–3, for the battle of Kynaxa, on the grounds that Plutarch has a slightly more negative portrait of Klearchos.
- 37 Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, 49–51.
- 38 [Basileios I], *Hortatory Chapters*, and see the editor’s introduction.
- 39 For the genre (if it is that) in general, see Païdas, Η θεματική του βυζαντινού «Κατόπτρου ηγεμόνος»; its coherence has been questioned by Odorico, ‘Les miroirs des princes.’

THE *EXCERPTA HISTORICA* OF KONSTANTINOS VII PORPHYROGENNETOS

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF KONSTANTINOS VII PORPHYROGENNETOS

Konstantinos VII (905–959) was one of the scholar-emperors of Byzantium, and the son of another scholar-emperor, Leon VI (“the Wise”), whom we discussed in the previous chapter. Both spent their reigns in the palace and did not go out on campaign. “Porphyrogennetos” means that Konstantinos was born while his father was emperor.¹ It was a moniker applied to many emperors, but in his case it stuck, possibly at his own insistence, to ameliorate the circumstances of his birth. For Konstantinos was the product of his father’s fourth marriage, and fourth marriages were not allowed by law. Leon had failed to produce an heir from his first three wives, and taking a fourth had caused an acrimonious legal, religious, and political controversy known as the Tetragamy.² Nevertheless, in the end the emperor had his way, and his heir. Konstantinos’ legitimacy as a son and successor emperor was never in question, but his origin was a painful story. Moreover, he was six when his father died in 912. After the brief reign of his uncle Alexandros (912–913), Leon’s brother, power passed to a series of regents, ambitious and sometimes feuding, only to end up, after a coup, in the hands of the capable admiral Romanos I Lekapenos (920–944).³ All parties in these struggles respected Konstantinos’ position as nominal emperor and eventual ruler, but sidelined him to pursue their own interests and did not allow him to actually govern in his own name. Romanos married him to his daughter Helene, but gradually promoted his own sons over him. Those sons overthrew Romanos in a coup in 944, but then Konstantinos VII ousted them in 945, whereupon he

finally became emperor in both name and fact. He governed the empire until his death in 959, leaving the throne to his son Romanos II (959–963).

Konstantinos' name is associated with a wide-ranging project of scholarly compilation and antiquarianism that used to be labeled "encyclopedism," but that term has now been questioned and widely rejected, for none of the works in question is like an encyclopedia as we understand that term.⁴ (The Byzantine work most like an encyclopedia is the classical reference work, the *Souda*, which was compiled probably in the second half of the tenth century, albeit relying on the works that issued from Konstantinos' project, especially the historical *Excerpta*.) Most of the compilations in question are something between an anthology and a reference work for a specific topic, purpose, or scientific discipline. Moreover, Konstantinos' own role in their production has been greatly downsized in recent scholarship: from being a prolific writer in his right, he is now seen more as the imperial patron of a team of scholars working more or less under his direction.⁵ One of the largest of those teams would have been employed in the creation of the historical *Excerpta*, a multi-volume anthology (of sorts) of historical passages. To contextualize its production, here is a partial list of some of the other projects underway at the court of Konstantinos, possibly concurrently and perhaps by the same team of scholars (in most cases, the Latin titles are modern; the works are listed in the bibliography under Konstantinos VII; and I am not including the emperor's letters and sermons, the only works that he may have written himself).

- *De administrando imperio*, an uneven survey of most of Byzantium's neighbors and foes, including many local legends, excerpts from previous texts, and advice on foreign policy. It has been suggested that the core of this work goes back to a project initiated by Leon VI.⁶
- *De thematibus*, an uneven antiquarian survey of Byzantium's provinces (*themata* or "themes"), focusing on classical associations and the origin of names.
- *De cerimoniis*, a massive compilation of guidelines for conducting imperial ceremonies in Constantinople, including excerpts from a sixth-century work on the same topic by Petros the patrician. In the form in which we have it, it also includes some treatises on imperial expeditions, one of which was originally composed by an official under Leon VI; campaign logistics for assaults on Crete; and material from the reign of Nikephoros II Phokas (963–969).

- The historical *Excerpta*: see below.
- *Geoponika*, a farming manual consisting of passages excerpted from ancient authors, and probably based on previous compilations.
- *Hippiatrika*, like the *Geoponika*, only dealing with veterinary medicine.
- *Vita Basilii*, a panegyric imperial biography of Konstantinos' grandfather Basileios I (867–886), the founder of the Macedonian dynasty.
- *Theophanes Continuatus*, a series of imperial biographies that fills in the period after the *Chronicle* of Theophanes the Confessor (which ends with the accession of Leon V) and before the rise of Basileios I (covered in the *Vita Basilii*). Its author was possibly (though not certainly) Theodoros Daphnopates, a high official, and it was likely meant as an improvement on the history of the same period written by Genesios, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, which was previously dedicated to Konstantinos VII but likely disappointed him.

All but the last two of these works are ambitious efforts to select and organize written materials relating to a certain discipline or matter of imperial concern (and other works can be added to this list of Konstantinos' projects, for example the *Synaxarion of Constantinople*, a collection of abbreviated saints' lives organized by the date of their feast in the calendar cycle).⁷ As an imperial project all this philology was almost without precedent. The most proximate precedent was in fact provided by Konstantinos' father Leon, who may have even laid the foundations for some of the projects completed later by his son. Works written or completed by Leon include the *Basilika*, the translation and reordering of the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*; the *Taktika*, a long military manual based on late antique and Byzantine models; a long collection of new laws, the *Novellae* (i.e., *Novels* or *New Constitutions*), modeled on those of Justinian; and, associated with his reign, were other works codifying aspects of the administration and court protocol.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to date precisely the works associated with Konstantinos, including the historical *Excerpta*. Some of them must have been in production for a long time, possibly already during the reign of Romanos I (920–944), and certainly also in the period of Konstantinos' sole reign (945–959). Some, including the *Book of Ceremonies* and possibly the *Excerpta*, were developed further after Konstantinos' death by those at the court who had a stake in them. The figure of Basileios Lekapenos has been suggested, who was an illegitimate son of Romanos I and a eunuch *parakoimomenos* (chamberlain) who assisted many of the emperors of this period to govern the empire.⁸

THE HISTORICAL *EXCERPTA*

Along with Photios' *Bibliothēke* (to appear hopefully in a later volume of this series), the Constantinian *Excerpta* are a major source for otherwise lost ancient and late antique historians.⁹ Konstantinos' team basically took the texts of at least twenty-six authors, cut them up into passages that could fit into one of the fifty-three volumes organized by theme or category, and then pasted them together to form a vast anthology of texts for that particular rubric. The authors whom we know that they used, in chronological order, were the following: Herodotos, Thucydides, Xenophon (*Education of Cyrus* and *Anabasis*), Polybios, Diodoros, Dionysios (the *Roman Antiquities*), Nikolaos of Damascus, Josephos, Arrian, Iamblichos (the *Babylonian History*, a novel), Appian, Cassius Dio, Dexippos, Eunapios, Sokrates, Priskos, Malchos, Zosimos, Ioannes Malalas, Prokopios, Petros the patrician, Agathias, Menandros, Theophylaktos, Ioannes of Antioch, and Georgios the Monk. In addition, Plutarch's *Life of Sulla* was used to fill in some gaps in Cassius Dio,¹⁰ and Markellinos' *Life of Thucydides* was used to preface that historian (once only as far as we know, in the volume on *Virtues and Vices*). Then, in the later tenth century, the editors of the *Souda* seem to have used the *Excerpta* rather than directly the original text of many historians, so scholars have speculated which additional authors that were used for the *Souda* might have been included in the now-lost books of the *Excerpta* (for example, Ailianos' *On Providence*, the fifth-century ecclesiastical historians Theodoretos, Sozomenos, and Philostorgios, Kandidos, and the Greek translation of the Latin epitomist Eutropios).¹¹

One of these authors was not a historian: Iamblichos, whose *Babyloniaka*, a now-lost romance novel,¹² was used as far as we know only in the volume on *Sententiae*, where it could fit, and briefly at that. It is possible that more authors than these were used, if they appeared only in the volumes of the *Excerpta* that have been lost and happened not to be mentioned in the cross-references found in the surviving tenth-century manuscript (see below). But the total list would not be much longer than the one above. Of these authors, some survive today in their entirety. Others survive in part (e.g., Polybios and Diodoros), though it is clear that the excerptors had access to them in their entirety. We have one work by Arrian that they used (the *Anabasis*) but not the others (the *Parthika* and his account of the Diodochoi, the Successors of Alexander). We have an abridgment of Malalas whereas they had the original full text (thus making their quotations

of him better than the text that has survived). Finally, they had many historians whose works are lost (Nikolaos, Dexippos, Eunapios, Priskos, Malchos, Petros, Menandros, and Ioannes of Antioch), except insofar as fragments are preserved in the surviving *Excerpta* and in other indirect sources. The order of the historians within each book of the *Excerpta* does not seem to have followed any obvious plan.¹³

We are therefore indebted to the excerptors for preserving what they did, even though it was in an unusual format and only a small part of their own work has survived. For some scholars this gratitude is tempered by a suspicion that the works in question were lost precisely because they were included in the *Excerpta* and thereby rendered irrelevant. It is, however, hard to see how that might have worked; moreover, the *Excerpta*, a multi-volume collection that required imperial patronage to be copied out, was not widely accessible, and was likely confined to the palace library. How could its existence have affected the private distribution of ancient historiography? Its exact repercussions on the transmission of Greek historiography remain to be explored, and there is possibly insufficient evidence to draw firm conclusions. The *Excerpta* seem to have been available for a while to scholars working in the palace. Some of the authors they contained survived in their entirety, some survived in part (e.g., Polybios¹⁴ and Cassius Dio), whereas others did not survive. Herodotos, Thucydides, and Xenophon were certainly circulating in more copies than any other ancient historian. The fate of the others may, in the end, have depended also on the vagaries of chance, e.g., the looting and destruction of 1204.

A few words must now be said about the structure of the *Excerpta*. Of the fifty-three subjects, only the one *On Embassies* has survived complete. This was either divided into two sections, namely on Roman embassies to the barbarians and the reverse, or these were two separate subjects among the fifty-three. About half of the volume on *Virtues and Vices* has survived, and substantial portions of two more, *On Plots* and the *Sententiae* (*Gnomic Statements*). (See the bibliography for how they have been published in the modern edition.)

The remaining forty-nine titles are lost. The preface to the *Excerpta*, which was placed at the start of each of the fifty-three volumes (see below), informs us that the first title was *On imperial accessions*. From the internal cross-references in the one surviving tenth-century manuscript, scholars have recovered the titles of twenty-six additional volumes. These are (including the surviving books):¹⁵

On imperial accessions; On the succession of monarchs; On the Caesars; On marriages; On plots against monarchs; On stratagems; On victory; On defeat; On recovering from defeat; On battles in war; On combat; On public orations; On embassies; On political administration; On ecclesiastical matters; On customs; On peoples; On settlements; On hunting; On bizarre events; On ekphrasis; Epigrams; On epistles; Sententiae; On Greek [or pagan] history; On who discovered what; On feats of valor; On Virtues and Vices.

Based on indirect evidence (a manuscript containing Theophylaktos and his continuer Nikephoros that seems to have been marked up by the excerptors themselves for use in the collection), P. Schreiner has proposed the following lost titles: *On the deaths of monarchs; On magistrates; On punishments; On festivals; On reasons for war; On sieges; On dangerous events; and On natural phenomena.*¹⁶ This proposal is, of course, conjectural.

If each of the fifty-three titles was at least as long as the ones that survive, the complete *Excerpta* would have been massive, but not as long as the combined lengths of all twenty-six (plus) authors. It is hard to believe that *every single passage* from all those works was excerpted, in other words that an effort was made to press every passage into one of the preselected categories. Not every passage with an embassy from Prokopios, Agathias, and Theophylaktos made it into the book(s) on *Embassies*. Moreover, the excerptors seem to have condensed and abridged some passages; they did not always copy verbatim.¹⁷ Finally, we do not know whether new categories were devised as the work progressed or the set of fifty-three was predetermined.

András Németh has written a brilliant doctoral dissertation (2010) on the *Excerpta*, meticulously examining its manuscript transmission, its extensive use by the editors of the *Souda*, and also reconstructing the methods of the excerptors themselves by uncovering the traces that they left in the cross-referencing system with which they endowed the finished work. Interested readers should consult his monograph, which is in preparation for publication as a book.¹⁸

Finally, we should note three manuscripts or texts composed around mid-century that, together with the *Excerpta*, show how ancient historiography was being used, repackaged, and transmitted during the long reign of Konstantinos VII. First, an anonymous tenth-century manual on how to defend against sieges (*De obsidione toleranda*) includes long verbatim extracts from Josephos, Polybios,

and Arrian's *Anabasis* to illustrate its points.¹⁹ These excerpts are "embedded" in the author's own discussion, though toward the end the text consists mostly of them. The second is Ambrosianus B 119 sup. (Gr. 139), a large codex created for the eunuch Basileios Lekapenos (the *parakoimomenos*) in 958–960 that contains many Byzantine works of military strategy. It includes a selection of military harangues from Xenophon (the *Education of Cyrus* and *Anabasis*), Josephos, and Herodianos, followed by two such speeches attributed to Konstantinos VII himself.²⁰ This collection may have been related in some way to the *Excerpta* volume *On public orations*, except that it was based on different textual traditions of the authors involved, so we are dealing with parallel editorial projects here.²¹ At least we can say that the method Basileios' scholars followed was the same as that of the excerptors.²² The third relevant text is the *Excerpta Antiqua* of Polybios, a selection from books 6–18 of the *History* that was made independently of the Constantinian *Excerpta*, possibly in the tenth century (or at any rate before 1000 AD). The manuscript tradition of Polybios, then, took its final shape in this period: the *Excerpta Antiqua*, the Constantinian *Excerpta*, and the full text of books 1–5, the earliest manuscript of which was copied out in 947 by the known copyist Ephraim (based on a tradition that was itself independent of the Constantinian *Excerpta*).²³ This was a formative period indeed.

THE PREFACE AND DEDICATORY POEM OF THE *EXCERPTA*

One and the same preface, the one translated below, was apparently placed at the head of each separate subject-volume of the *Excerpta*. It varied only in the title itself, and at the end each iteration of the same preface gave the individual number of the present subject in the series of fifty-three. We have this preface in connection with the volumes on *Embassies* and *Virtues and Vices*, and so we know that the former was no. 27 and the latter no. 50 in the series. Each preface was followed by the list of authors included in that book, and this presumably varied also from subject to subject.

The preface echoes traditional themes of imperial propaganda, specifically the emperor's role in the *renovatio* of learning and by extension in the restoration of the state.²⁴ For this to work there must always have been a corresponding prior decline, which in this case is blamed on the excessive accumulation of historical literature, leading to "indolence" on the part of prospective readers. This ῥαθυμία

was a catch-word in the legislation of Justinian, who also presented himself as a restorer of the Roman world through his conquest and legislative reforms. It was his predecessors who had been indolent to the point of allowing Roman vigor to lapse.²⁵ There is another neat parallel between Justinian and the rationale behind the *Excerpta*. Justinian justified his codification of Roman law in part by citing the frustrating predicament of all who found themselves facing an unmanageable and unsystematic body of legal texts and authorities.²⁶ In this respect, the *Excerpta* can be viewed as a historiographical version of the *Digest* of Roman law, a reordered selection of excerpted authorities responding to a moral and pragmatic problem (except that the *Digest* also abridges those authors to a far greater degree). A Roman emperor was now bringing his ordering authority to bear on the Greek historiographical tradition.

Konstantinos' encounter with Justinian was mediated through his father Leon VI. In his military manual, Leon had likewise suggested that "neglect" had contributed to a decline in military preparedness, and he proposed to gather up from a multitude of ancient sources everything that would be useful for effecting a restoration (*epanorthosis*) of good order.²⁷ Closer to hand, in the collection of his own *Novels*, Leon had drawn attention to the confusion that prevailed through the accumulation of too many laws, and even reproached his model Justinian for contributing to the problem.²⁸ The *Excerpta* is a project offered in the same spirit.

The preface was followed (presumably in all fifty-three cases) by an *Iambic Poem Manifesting True Royal Conduct* that praises Konstantinos VII as responsible for the *Excerpta*. It survives today only before the collection on *Virtues and Vices*. From late antiquity onward, and especially in the tenth century, it was common for works produced under the patronage of an emperor or other powerful figure to bear a dedicatory poem praising him for his initiative in sponsoring the project and for his virtues in general.²⁹ Justinian and Tribonian were praised in a poem written later for their work in compiling Roman law.³⁰ I will explain some of the quite interesting classical allusions in this poem in a brief commentary placed after the translation. Here it should be noted that the first of its images, that of plucking flowers, was extremely conventional, and even used in the preface of the *Book of Ceremonies*. It was the central image in the famous short treatise by St Basileios of Kaisareia (fourth century), the *Address to Young Men on How They Might Profit from Greek Literature*: they should pluck

all that is good from it like flowers from a meadow, and leave behind all that was bad.³¹ The image is here varied to fit the objective of the project at hand: the flowers, previously scattered, are here gathered up and reordered into a new composition.³²

TRANSLATION OF THE PREFACE AND POEM³³

*Subject matter of the book on embassies,
Section on those sent by the Romans to the barbarians*

PREFACE

All the emperors and private citizens of the past who did not allow their mind to be dragged down or softened by hedonistic pursuits, but who instead, because of their virtue, maintained the nobility of their soul unblemished, persevered in their labors and busied themselves with literature. Those who became lovers of higher culture and so dedicated their lives to the more rational pursuits wrote something noteworthy, each of them in his own way, desiring to leave this behind to future generations as a brilliant testimony of their own polymathy; at the same time, they were looking to earn eternal fame among their readers. But in the passage of so many years, the throng of events has become innumerable and so has that of their written accounts; the complexity of history has expanded to an infinite and simply unmanageable extent. It was therefore inevitable that people's preferences would, over time, incline in a worse direction, neglect good things, and grow lazily indifferent to past events; attaining truth became a lesser priority. As a result of this, the discovery of history was obscured by uncertainty, in part because of the scarcity of really useful books and in part because people feared and dreaded their excessive verbosity.

Konstantinos, born in the purple [porphyrogennetos], the most orthodox and Christian of all the emperors who have ever reigned, had the sharpest understanding of what was good and a most energetic mind. He judged that the best thing to benefit other people and create something useful for life would be, first, to gather, in a spirit of diligent inquiry, books from all the various places of the earth, books that are swelling with every kind and manner of knowledge. Next, he thought that it was necessary to reduce the sheer magnitude of the books' long-windedness,³⁴ which tires readers and seems so annoying and

burdensome to most people, by dividing up the works into small sections. In this way, the benefit that arises from them could be set before everyone in common without creating discontent, so that through this selection the eloquence of these accounts will more effectively and diligently bring itself to the attention of the students of literature and also be imprinted upon them in a more abiding way. In addition, in a grand conception he shrewdly distributed them among various subject-headings, fifty-three in number, which enclose every great achievement in history. Nothing in these texts would escape being numbered among one of these categories, and absolutely nothing would be omitted just because the sequence of the narrative was broken up by its division into these conceptual rubrics; instead, it would preserve everything in one coherent body by subsuming under each category not a synopsis of the text but, to be precise here, by finding a proper home for each excerpt.

Among the subject-headings, then, the present one is entitled “concerning the embassies of the Romans to the barbarians,” and it happens to be numbered twenty-seventh, while the first one has the title *On imperial accessions*. This preface will specify who authored each passage, i.e., what its attribution is, so that these subject-headings not be anonymous and inauthentic, like illegitimate children bearing a false name. The texts are from the chronicles listed below. *[Each preface lists the authors from whom the excerpted passages were taken for that particular collection.]*

IAMBIC POEM MANIFESTING TRUE ROYAL CONDUCT

1. The long passage of time has scattered texts,
like flowers, everywhere about the earth.
Blossoming, they did not transmit their sweet-smelling grace.
But now, crowned well by them, Konstantinos plucked some
5. and, composing melodious musical poetry,
set an enchanting aroma and fragrant texts
before all who partake of higher culture.
Let us wreath him with our words, that lover of words.
He stands out incomparable among rulers,
10. shining, manifesting beneficial power,
a Giant bringing the dawn like the light of the sun,
to all his enemies and to his loyal subjects alike.
Thus, let all men who have a voice cry out to God,

- “Make him another Tithonos of longevity,
15. so that he can bring better things into our lives.”

COMMENTARY

11. The “Giant” (actually a Titan) who brought the dawn (here φεραιυγής) was Eos (Latin Aurora). She was associated not only with dawn specifically but with the light of day in general, hence the otherwise odd conjunction in this verse (for the dawn *is* the light of the sun). In Homer, moreover, her robe is saffron-colored (κροκόπεπλος, e.g., *Iliad* 8.1), but a crocus is a type of flower, making her dress a good fit for the poem’s overall image. In the *Odyssey* (5.121–124, 15.249–251) and in ancient literature generally, she is a very amorous goddess. Her story continues at v. 14 (see the next note).
14. Tithonos was a Trojan taken as a lover by Eos: Konstantinos is compared to her in v. 11, and now the fate of Tithonos is being wished upon him by his grateful subjects. But the story is not altogether happy: when Eos asked Zeus to make Tithonos immortal, she forgot to ask for immortal youth as well. As a result, he grew older and older, and was reduced to a babbling and senile old man. Eos locked him up in a room and threw away the key (*Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 5.218–238). It is likely that the poet forgot this part of the story and was treating Tithonos as a symbol of mere longevity. As it happens, a dedication of the *Synaxarion of Constantinople* to an anonymous emperor (ed. Delehay, p. xiv) contains a prayer that he live as long as Tithonos or Abraham. The parallel with our poem has suggested that this emperor was also Konstantinos VII.³⁵

NOTES

- 1 Dagron, ‘Nés dans la pourpre.’ For Konstantinos VII and his reign in general, see Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, a panoramic work but outdated in many respects; and the papers in Markopoulos, ed., Κωνσταντίνος Ζ’.
- 2 For the Tetragamy in the context of Leon’s reign, see Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI*, ch. 6.
- 3 For his reign, see Runciman, *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus*.
- 4 “Encyclopedism” was established (though not coined) by Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin*, esp. ch. 10. It was decisively questioned by Odorico, ‘La cultura della συλλογή.’ For the uncertain state of this field now, see Van Deun and Macé, eds., *Encyclopedic Trends in Byzantium?*
- 5 Ševčenko, ‘Re-Reading Constantine Porphyrogenitus.’
- 6 Howard-Johnston, ‘The *De administrando imperio*.’
- 7 Luzzi, ‘Note sulla recensione Sinassario’; Ševčenko, ‘Re-Reading Constantine Porphyrogenitus,’ 188. For

these projects in general, as attempts to organize knowledge, see Magdalino, 'Knowledge in Authority.'

- 8 Countless papers have now been written about Basileios as a patron of the arts and literature (less so as a political figure). For an introduction to his life, see Brokkaar, 'Basil Lecapenus.' The most recent assessment is Angelidi, 'Basile Lacapène.'
- 9 Németh, *Imperial Systematization*, is indispensable for understanding this work; Flusin, 'Les *Excerpta* Constantiniens,' is a stimulating introduction.
- 10 Németh, *Imperial Systematization*, 48 n. 142, 212; for the complete list, see *ibid.* 3.
- 11 Adler, *Suidae Lexicon*, v. 1, xix–xx.
- 12 For a translation of the surviving fragments, see Reardon, ed., *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, 783–797.
- 13 The modern editors of the *Excerpta* (v. 4, viii) proposed an order for the historians in the book on *Virtues and Vices* (and only for that book), but it is tenuous; Flusin, 'Les *Excerpta* Constantiniens,' 545–553, reviews various possibilities.
- 14 For the relation of the *Excerpta* to the main tradition of Polybios, see Moore, *The Manuscript Tradition*.
- 15 Following the list in Németh, *Imperial Systematization*, 73, with different translations; at 79–86 he reconstructs the contents of some of the lost titles, also from the cross-references; see also Flusin, 'Les *Excerpta* Constantiniens,' 553–558.
- 16 Schreiner, 'Die Historikerhandschrift.'
- 17 For Priskos, see Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, v. 1, 55, 113; for their omission of passages, see Németh, *Imperial Systematization*, 228–235, but cf. 237; in general, see Flusin, 'Les *Excerpta* Constantiniens,' 541–543.
- 18 For now see Németh, *Imperial Systematization*, and the article 'The Imperial Systematisation.'
- 19 Sullivan, 'A Byzantine Instructional Manual.'
- 20 Mazzucchi, 'Dagli anni di Basilio,' 282.
- 21 Mazzucchi, 'Dagli anni di Basilio,' 290–292.
- 22 Németh, *Imperial Systematization*, 175.
- 23 In general, see Moore, *The Manuscript Tradition*; for Ephraim's Polybios, see Perria, 'Un nuovo codice di Efrem'; and Prato, 'Il monaco Efrem.'
- 24 Radočević, 'The Emperor as Patron of Learning.'
- 25 This point is made throughout Justinian's *Novels*. Leon VI, who styled himself as a Justinianic legislator and renovator, also suggested that "negligence" could cause, and had caused, decline in military matters: *Taktika* pr. 2, 5.
- 26 See esp. the constitution *Deo Auctore* that ratifies the *Digest*. For Justinian's legal ideology and the codification of the law, see Honoré, *Tribonian*.
- 27 Leon VI, *Taktika* pr. 2, 5–6
- 28 Leon VI, *Novels* preface, and *Novel* 1.
- 29 Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, ch. 6 and App. 9.
- 30 The poem is printed in Mommsen's edition of the *Digest*, p. xii.
- 31 The work is more subtle than is commonly understood: see Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 164–165.
- 32 For the points of contact between the preface and the poem, see Németh, *Imperial Systematization*, 194.
- 33 The preface was translated into French by Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin*, 281–282, and this was translated, along with the rest of his book, into English and Greek (see the bibliography). An English translation was made by Németh, *Imperial Systematization*, 184–186, but it is sometimes awkward. Also, the parallel passages that he cites in the apparatus are only lexicographically relevant; they do not, I believe, point to texts that the author of the preface had in mind. The version translated here prefaces the book on *Embassies*.
- 34 *platyepeia* is a *hapax*. It could refer either to the extent of each individual work or, which is more likely here given the argument, to the combined length of all the collected works. The excerptors did not abridge the passages that they selected: they cut-and-pasted them verbatim.

35 Ševčenko, 'Re-Reading Constantine Porphyrogenitus,' 188.

THE SCHOLIA ON THE ZOSIMOS MANUSCRIPT

Zosimos is the last surviving openly pagan historian of late antiquity. His anti-Christian *New History*, which seems to be unfinished and survives incomplete, idolizes Julian and blames the Christian emperors of the fourth century for failing to keep up the proper rituals and thereby causing the decline of Rome. The work begins by surveying ancient and Roman history, then becomes more detailed as it enters the third century, devotes most of its attention to the fourth century, and ends abruptly in 410. Zosimos relied heavily on his predecessors Eunapios and Olympiodoros of Thebes, both pagans. Eunapios' *History*, many long fragments of which survive, had continued that of Dexippos of Athens and focused on the fourth century, idolizing the pagan emperor Julian. The *History* of Olympiodoros, which is mostly lost, was written for the emperor Theodosios II, whom Olympiodoros had served as a diplomat, and ended in 425. Zosimos used other sources too, but failed to synthesize them into a single coherent narrative. As a result, for example, he transmits both positive and negative views about the emperor Constantine.¹ But it was the negative ones that stuck out in Byzantium, which otherwise chose to preserve a highly laudatory, indeed hagiographical, tradition about the first Christian emperor.

Photios, who read Zosimos, says that he held the rank of *comes* and was a retired *advocatus fisci* (ἀπὸ φισκοσυνηγόρου),² which was a very high office, and we can infer from one passage that Zosimos was writing in Constantinople.³ Given the tension between his beliefs and the requirement for holding office in the later empire that its holders be avowed Christians, scholars have conjectured that he may have “concealed his paganism while he was in office” or that his history was deliberately not circulated until after his death, which was presumably not far off for a retired official anyway.⁴

Zosimos' dates are hard to pin down. A consensus puts him at about 500 AD, though the arguments (based on internal evidence) seem weak. The first historian known to have used Zosimos' *History* was Eustathios of Epiphaneia, and Malalas says that Eustathios died soon after the Roman-Persian war of 505, which is when his history came to an end.⁵ But we cannot trust Malalas to have been precise or accurate here, and it was a common mistake to date a historian to right after the last event he recounts; also, we have Malalas' own chronicle only in an abridged version, which may be more or less faithful to the original. The date of Zosimos, then, depends on that of Eustathios, the first person we know read him; and the date of Eustathios ultimately depends on the date of Malalas, the first person we know read Eustathios. Scholars have conjectured that Malalas published initial versions of his *Chronicle* in the early 530s and then the fullest version after 565, possibly as late as the 570s.⁶ There is too much uncertainty and conjecture in these reconstructions. At this point it is probably safest to say that Zosimos could have written between 450 and 550 AD. The ecclesiastical historian Euagrios Scholastikos, writing in the 590s, used both Eustathios and Malalas, and likely Zosimos too; at any rate, he includes a long polemic against Zosimos in the debate over Constantine, which some suspect he lifted from Eustathios.⁷ At any rate, the chief points of contention in Euagrios' digression are that Constantine imposed new taxes; that he murdered his son Crispus and wife Fausta; that he converted to Christianity because he was promised absolution for all his crimes, after pagan priests refused to forgive them; and that the Roman empire declined when the emperors adopted Christianity. Yet for all that Zosimos was not a very good historian, Euagrios botches the debate. He is plainly wrong (and Zosimos right) on the first two points; he suspiciously avoids discussing the second; and he defends the Christian empire as victorious by granting it all Roman successes since the birth of Jesus. Ultimately, he just heaps abuse on Zosimos, which would have satisfied most Christian readers.

In the ninth century, Photios wrote a surprisingly balanced review of the *New History* in his *Bibliothēke*.⁸ In the tenth century, passages from Zosimos were included in the Konstantinian *Excerpta*, a decision that requires more discussion and explanation.⁹

Why did the Byzantines keep and read Zosimos? Indeed, the question can and has been asked about other anti-Christian authors of late antiquity, such as Julian and Proklos. The answer for the others must be drawn from the particular uses to which they were put in the intellectual life of the Christian empire. For instance,

Proklos was philosophically useful. As for Zosimos, the six scholiasts translated below suggest why a manuscript of the *History* was kept in Byzantium and, more broadly, explain the role that Zosimos has played in modern studies of the fall of paganism and the “triumph” of Christianity, studies that until the late twentieth century have relied on an overt or implicit Christian framework. Specifically, the function that Zosimos performs is to make the case for later paganism look as weak as possible. His incoherence as a narrator (using both positive and negative sources for Constantine, Stilicho, and others), his shaky grasp of late Platonism, his knee-jerk and transparent partisanship, and his easily refutable arguments for ritual efficacy make the argument for Christianity seem all that stronger and more inevitable. If that was the best that the pagans produced by ca. 500, what was the point of preserving their traditions? Zosimos was retained precisely to be refuted, over and over again. Euagrios’ lackluster performance in this field of debate was only the first in a series of affirmations of Orthodoxy-via-denunciation of the vile Zosimos. His arguments about the deleterious effects of the new religion also had the virtue of getting worse over time, the longer the Christian Roman empire survived,¹⁰ though one scholiast was sympathetic to his complaint about cultural decline (see scholion 2.5 below). The Byzantines did not, by contrast, keep the anti-Christian treatises of Porphyry and Julian, which posed formidable, indeed insurmountable intellectual challenges. Their works did not lapse through neglect: they were actively sought out and destroyed.

THE BYZANTINE SCHOLIA ON ZOSIMOS

The *New History* survives in only one Byzantine manuscript, Vat. gr. 156, made in the tenth or eleventh century by four scribes; all other manuscripts, dating from the fifteenth century and later, are copies of this one. For the description of this manuscript and the publication of the scholia it contains we are indebted to the excellent work of Anna Maria Forcina.¹¹ Based on handwriting, she identifies six readers who recorded their reactions in the margins of the text, the first of whom identified himself by name (Basileios the monk); the others may be identified by their handwriting, including Maximos Planoudes and Nikephoros Gregoras. The fact that both of them read this book suggests that, in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, the book may have formed part of the library of the Chora monastery, a center for intellectual life at this time.¹² The comments of each of the scholiasts will be grouped separately, to preserve their

integrity as readers, and their scholia translated in the order in which they occur, numbered sequentially.

SCHOLIAST 1 (BASILEIOS THE MONK; BISHOP OF KAISAREIA?)

The first scholiast is also the first of the four scribes of Vat. gr. 156, who wrote out the text from the beginning to the seventh line of f. 9r, that is down to Zos. 1.23.2, and who then revised and corrected the work of the second scribe (who wrote from that point down to 40v, or Zos. 2.34.2).¹³ His marginal notes cluster around Zosimos' polemic against Constantine. He possibly copied these scholia from a prior exemplar, i.e., our scribe was possibly not Basileios the monk (identified in 1.1), but was only copying his notes. Basileios has been tentatively identified with Basileios "the Most Insignificant," a mid tenth-century bishop of Kaisareia in Kappadokia who was active in imperial and ecclesiastical politics and wrote a commentary on the orations of Gregorios of Nazianzos that he dedicated to the emperor Konstantinos VII Porphyrogennetos. It is possible that he read Zosimos to prepare comments on Gregorios' *Invectives* against Julian.¹⁴

- 1.1 *ad Zos. 2.7.1 (f. 28r)* After his account of the reign of Diocletian (284–305), which is missing from the manuscript, Zosimos digresses on the *ludi saeculares* and quotes a Sibylline oracle to prove his contention that the empire survived so long as these rites were performed.

Thus, as the oracle says and is only true, after all, while all this was observed according to tradition, the Roman empire was safe and the Romans maintained their control over what we might call our entire global empire. But once this festival was neglected after Diocletian's abdication, the empire gradually collapsed and was imperceptibly barbarized.

The festival ought to have been celebrated in 313, but Constantine and Licinius neglected it, thus "matters were bound to come to their present unhappy state."

Basileios the monk [responds]: This foul man assumes falsehoods as the truth and draws impossible conclusions as if they were possible. He says, "as per the oracle and what is only true." But truth is not what the oracle

spoke, nor were these rites performed according to a divine tradition, nor were they such as to survive to the very end. Even after this festival of yours was neglected, the empire of the Romans continued to rule over our global empire for no less a time than when this festival, which God hates, was observed. As nothing in this world of the senses is immutable, and even your Plato says that change is the mother of all things,¹⁵ how would it be possible, you impious man, for mutable and perishable men to hold a mutable and perishable global empire unchanged for the rest of time? But know that it is not atheists but Christians who hold it. Reader: see that you are not carried away by his argument. This impious writer bursts out with these comments against proper religion in order to make Christianity seem responsible for the barbarization of the Roman empire, and at the same time he says these things to open the door for his invective against the great and august Constantine.

- 1.2 *ad Zos. 2.8.3 (f. 28v)* In 305, Constantine, ambitious to be emperor himself, fled from the court of Galerius in the east to his father in Britain, maiming the legs of the horses at the stations so that he could not be pursued.

He was pursued by Maximianus [Galerius] to be killed, not because he was seized by a lust for the throne, as this enemy of the truth [Zosimos] says falsely; rather, he was envied and hated because of his surpassing good character, as many had already seen in him the clear signs of his own personal virtue.

Note: The notion that the Tetrarchs planned to murder Constantine appears in Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 1.20. The story of the horse-maiming is first found in Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 40.2 (ca. 360), who stresses Constantine's ambition to rule. Eutropius, *Breviarium* 10.5, stresses Constantine's extraordinary ambition (his *Breviarium* had been translated into Greek, at least twice).¹⁶ Later Byzantine fantasies about Constantine elaborated his escape from the murderous hands of the Tetrarchs.¹⁷

- 1.3 *ad Zos. 2.16.1–4 (f. 32r)* Constantine's defeat of Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge in 312. The scholiast addresses Zosimos:

This champion of yours [Maxentius], who preserved ancestral tradition

and observed the rites of that unlawful idol-madness, fell into the trap that he himself had secretly set. As a result, the champion of Christ and our group [Constantine] was strengthened, all to the glory of God to the shame of Zeus and your atheist faction.

Note: The reference to Maxentius' self-destroying trap alludes to Eusebios' Biblical exposition (of Psalm 7) on the battle in his *Life of Constantine* 1.38.2–4.

- 1.4 *ad Zos. 2.18.1 (f. 32v)* Constantine attacked Licinius in 314 even though the latter “had given him no cause” for the attack.

According to you, who are a stranger to all truth, [Licinius gave] no cause. In truth, however, he was behaving outrageously and attacking piety and blaspheming against Christ and God, killing many people and even plotting against the emperor himself, and so paid a suitable penalty for his deeds.

Note: The scholiast is following the attack on Licinius in Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 1.49–59, who accuses him of fomenting a persecution against the Christians.

- 1.5 *ad Zos. 2.29.2 (f. 38r)* Constantine kills his son Crispus in 326 on suspicion of having an affair with his step-mother Fausta, and then kills Fausta by placing her in an overheated bath.

Instead of admiring that blessed man for this very reason, this satanic slanderer who is so full of impiety thinks to weave some slanders out of it. But it is not worth believing all this, which alienates one from the faith. Even if these things happened in this way, would he not be more worthy of admiration than criticism for disregarding his ties to such irrational people, for punishing such outrageous license and lack of self-control, and not even sparing his own dearest relatives? And why is any of this troubling to you anyway, you who are not ashamed of worshipping and revering gods who have corrupted their mothers, children, and siblings?

Note: the scholion is fundamentally rhetorical in its repetition of key words, its exhortation to ignore the charges, its reversal of their implications (“even if it did happen ...”), and in bringing counter-charges (“your honored figures were just as

bad”). All bases are covered, though the speaker remains non-committal as to the facts. The scholiast’s main counter-source, Eusebios, is silent about those events, so he has no counter-narrative to use against Zosimos. Sozomenos, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.5, had already tried to refute these charges, which were really historical facts, as did later Euagrius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.41, most ineffectually.

1.6 *ad* Zos. 2.28.2 (f. 38r) Constantine treacherously put Licinius to death.¹⁸

What a faithless pagan-lover! He accuses the most faithful [emperor] of being faithless and breaking his oaths, but hides the sins that Licinius committed against God and the emperor, for which sins he would have merited death not just once but two or even three times, were it only possible. He attributes faithlessness and the breaking of oaths to the most faithful and oath-abiding [emperor].

1.7 *ad* Zos. 2.29.1 (f. 38r) “When he became sole emperor, Constantine no longer hid his malicious nature.” The scholiast again addresses Zosimos.

Most wicked and truly malicious one, for what other reason are you hurling blasphemies upon that upright and most Christ-like soul if not because he tore down your loathsome and malignant form of worship?

1.8 *ad* Zos. 2.29.1 (f. 38r) Constantine “adhered to traditional religion not because he truly honored it but because it was useful to him.” The scholiast addresses Zosimos.

It is because of this, most accursed one, that you are slandering and attacking that most irreproachable man. But why should he not have made use “for the sake of utility,” on the one hand, of the useless and pointless idols in which he was raised or, on the other hand, of the useful and beneficial beliefs to which he converted?

1.9 *ad* Zos. 2.29.1 (f. 38r) Constantine arrived at Rome “full of arrogance.” The scholiast addresses Zosimos.

Not arrogance, you who are truly most arrogant. For what could be more modest than the soul of Constantine? Rather, he was full of decency and piety.

SCHOLIAST 2 (IOANNES XIPHILINOS, THE NEPHEW OF THE PATRIARCH?)

Forcina considers the handwriting of this scholiast to be very close to that of the fourth scribe of the manuscript, a hand of the eleventh century responsible for most of the text of Zosimos (ff. 49r–152r). If the scribe and scholiast were not the same person, they were contemporaries.¹⁹ Forcina also suggests that this second scholiast was none other than Ioannes Xiphilinos, the nephew of the patriarch Ioannes VIII Xiphilinos (1064–1075) who, during the reign of Michael VII Doukas (1071–1078) produced an epitome of some of the books of the *Roman History* of Cassius Dio; this epitome is one of our main sources for parts of Dio’s text.²⁰ Our scholiast preserves an otherwise unknown fragment of Cassius Dio (see 2.1 below), therefore he might have been Xiphilinos. However, Forcina’s belief that Xiphilinos Jr. is the only known reader of Dio in the eleventh century is incorrect. He is mentioned also by Kekaumenos, a modest provincial writer of the 1070s, as “Dion the Roman,”²¹ and Xiphilinos was presumably writing for an audience that was generally interested in history. In his own generation, there were three men who wrote or would write contemporary histories (Michael Psellos, Michael Attaleiates, and Ioannes Skylitzes); the first two wrote about Republican Rome as well.²² This was a period of Roman antiquarianism in Byzantium,²³ and Cassius Dio would again be used extensively in the next century by Ioannes Zonaras. So we need not limit our options to Xiphilinos. Be that as it may, this scholiast is the least fixated on the controversies about Constantine, commenting on events and people in many places in Zosimos, but not on Constantine.

2.1 *ad Zos. 2.5.5 (f. 27v)* Zosimos is describing the *ludi saeculares*.

Dion says that this festival is called the sekoularia [secularia] and that it was held in his own time under [Septimius] Severus.

Note: This fragment of Dio’s *Roman History* is not preserved elsewhere.²⁴ Zosimos (*History* 2.4.3) has just said that the festival was celebrated under Severus (in 204 AD).

2.2 *ad Zos. 3.1.3 (f. 54r)* Eusebia, the wife of Constantius II, urged her husband in 355 to appoint Julian as Caesar in Gaul, saying that he is “simple in

character.”

Yes, simple, more complex and treacherous than Proteus himself.

Note: Gregorios of Nazianzos twice compares Julian to Proteus, a figure from mythology who could alter his form and appearance at will: *Oration* 4.62, 4.84. Gregorios’ *Invectives against Julian* (*Orations* 4–5) were used by many Byzantine writers to refute and disparage the last pagan emperor.

2.3 *ad Zos. 3.32.6 (f. 76v)* Having recounted Julian’s Persian expedition and the settlement with the Persians made by his successor Jovian (in 363), entailing the surrender of cities along the frontier, Zosimos argues that the Romans had never before lost territories in this way: this was all a consequence of Julian’s *death*.

This argument makes no sense. How can you score a point for the idol-worshipper if after his death the Romans lost certain cities, given that those cities were preserved by his predecessors too and not by him alone? Rather, I think that those who consider the matter well should not blame the loss of those cities on his death – unless one thinks also [of the deaths] of those who reigned before him in times when Roman affairs were especially flourishing – but especially on the indolence and weakness of those who came after him [i.e., Jovian]. If he added something [i.e., territories] to what he found [i.e., upon his accession], he might perhaps be praiseworthy, and, if he lost them, he would be blameworthy. But if, through his impulsive movements and strategy, he brought [Roman] interests to such a state of risk that they needed only a small push in order to fall down or to collapse shortly afterward because they had been placed in suspense by him without being fixed upon firm foundations or established securely and, for that reason, they fell and, in their own fall, brought down everything else along with them; well, that culpable person is hardly worth exhuming, much less praising.

Note: the blame-game for the loss of cities in Jovian’s treaty with the Persians began immediately, and we have many contemporary reactions to the outcome of the expedition, from Gregorios of Nazianzos, Ephrem the Syrian, Libanios, and others. Arguments about historical parallels, like that in Zosimos, began to be produced soon, e.g., Eutropius, *Breviarium* 10.17.1–2.²⁵ Because of the central

position of Julian in the self-definition of Byzantine identity and orthodoxy, this debate could be picked up at any time. The scholiast does not seek to defend Jovian (whom he calls “indolent and weak”) but aims to refute the notion that the very well-being of the empire depended on Julian. His use of εἰδωλιανός for Julian (a hostile pun on his name, Ioulianos) comes from Gregorios of Nazianzos, *Oration* 4.77.

2.4 *ad Zos.* 4.3.2 (f. 79v) Valentinian I sought to introduce a law against nocturnal rites, “wanting to hinder, through such a law, rites that were observed secretly (μυστικῶς).”

i.e., [that were] observed foully (μυσαρῶς).

Note: This is not a correction of the text, but a polemical pun.

2.5 *ad Zos.* 5.24.6 (f. 130v) After the exile of John Chrysostom from Constantinople in 404, his followers rioted and burned parts of the City, including some ancient statues of the Muses that had been set up by Constantine before the Senate house by the palace.²⁶ Zosimos takes this event as a sign of the onset of ignorance and lack of culture (*amousia*).

Even if no other of your predictions is trustworthy, this one about the lack of culture (amousia) exhibited by later generations has been utterly proven right. For right now, in all the other cities, and I do mean all of them, in both the west and the east, that are under the Romans, and virtually throughout the entire world, one would not find even a faint trace of learning or literature or the teaching of any cultured subject (mousa), or even a library or any other liberal art. In this imperial city [Constantinople], some books and literary arts still survive. Except that here too the Muses are tottering among only a few people still, and there is fear that the very name of the Muses and the arts of literature will be fail entirely here as well. So thoroughly has our ambition and diligence for these things declined; the divine passion for learning has been extinguished entirely and put out. All the arts and sciences, which guide us in our greatest accomplishments and actions, have long been abandoned by the human race, and we are in danger of being like monkeys from now on, at least when compared to the men of old, preserving only a faint imitation-likeness of their form, but having entirely lost their virtue and knowledge.

Note: This is an extraordinary outburst, using the complaint of an ancient pagan critic of Christianity to lament the ongoing decline of learning among Christians some six hundred years later. Learned Christians since Gregorios of Nazianzos had always pushed back against their coreligionists' indifference and hostility to secular learning, while, on the other hand, refuting the claims of actual pagans that Christianity itself was the root cause of this and other problems associated with imperial decline.²⁷ This scholiast found himself in a similar predicament. In previous centuries, emperors had been (tendentiously) criticized for causing the destruction of learning (e.g., the Iconoclast emperors by their Iconophile critics), or praised for restoring higher education.²⁸ But such general complaints about the state of secular learning in the empire, unconnected to a specific debate over an emperor or policy, were almost non-existent in Byzantium before the eleventh century. Michael Psellos famously claimed (in the 1060s) to have single-handedly revived philosophy, and describes the state of affairs before his efforts in almost identical terms to our scholiast.²⁹ Around the same time, Psellos' student Ioannes Italos painted a dismal picture of Byzantine learning in a public debate, adding that the Arabs now had it all.³⁰ These complaints would continue to be made by the educated elite until the end of the empire's existence, but they were only one rhetorical trope among others, to be deployed as circumstances required. It was just as possible to assert Byzantine cultural superiority.

2.6 *ad Zos. 5.34.5–6 (f. 137r)* Zosimos praises Stilicho after recording his death.

A most meritorious encomium. Stilicho could pride himself on these achievements. And yet this stupid author [Zosimos] ridiculed above this man whom he is now praising.

Note: Zosimos' contradictory view of Stilicho is often cited as proof of his inability to synthesize his different sources coherently. His negative stance toward Stilicho (e.g., 5.1.1–3, 5.11.4) came from Eunapios whereas his praise for him (as here) came from Olympiodoros of Thebes, whose narrative he turned to when that of Eunapios ended. Photios noted that Zosimos was milder in his criticism of Stilicho than Eunapios had been,³¹ but our scholiast caught the contradiction.

2.7 *ad Zos. 5.40.3 (f. 141r)* The scholiast here merely made a note of a saying that

impressed him; it occurred during Alaric's siege of Rome in 408.

NB what Alaric said to the envoys of the Romans who were saying that a large multitude of the people was ready to make war against him: "It is easier to cut down thick grass than that which is thin."

SCHOLIAST 3

Forcina dates this lone scholion to the end of the eleventh century.³²

3.1 *ad Zos. 3.3.3 (f. 55r)* Sixty thousand barbarians (Alemanni) were killed in battle when Julian defeated them at Strasburg in 357, and the same number jumped into the river and drowned, making this victory not inferior to those of Alexander the Great.

In fact, even those who admire him [Julian] greatly and glorify his deeds with encomia say that six thousand barbarians fell in that battle, certainly not that those who fell numbered in the tens of thousands, which Alexander the Great killed when he fought the Persians. [Zosimos says] this delirious nonsense because he was utterly blinded by partisanship into praising him [Julian] to wild excess, just as, on account of vehemently hating the Christians, he mostly lies about Constantine. One might call a history of this kind a string of delirious nonsense and the vomit of a bilious man, but not an exposition of actual events or a proper narrative.

Note: Scholars have proposed emending the transmitted figure in Zosimos of sixty thousand to six thousand, which is the number of barbarian casualties lying on the field according to Ammianus Marcellinus (*Res Gestae* 16.12.63, plus an uncounted number lost in the river); Libanios says eight thousand fell (*Oration* 18.60). But for the comparison to Alexander to work, Zosimos must have had a higher figure.³³ It is not clear which panegyrical account of Julian's victories the scholiast had read, as Ammianus, a Latin author, did not circulate in Byzantium; possibly Eunapios was not yet lost.

SCHOLIAST 4 (MAXIMOS PLANOUEDES)

Forcina claims to have identified the handwriting of this scholiast with that of the

late thirteenth-century scholar Maximos Planoudes, who is also known to have been interested in oracles, a topic that figures prominently in Zosimos' *History* and is fixated upon by scholiast 4.³⁴ Bianconi supports this identification with additional evidence, and proposes that scholia 5.2 and 5.3 might also belong to Planoudes.³⁵

4.1 *ad Zos. 1.29.3 (f. 10v)* The cities of Greece were repairing their walls in the turmoil of the mid third century AD, including Athens, whose walls had been ruined ever since the city had been taken by Sulla in 86 BC.

*It is good that you admit that the city was captured in a siege by Sulla.
What way out will you have, then, when you lie and say that Athena stood
in armor upon the walls and defended the city against its assailants?*

Note: The scholiast is referring here to the story told later by Zosimos (5.6.1) that Athena stood on the walls of Athens ready to defend the city against the attack of Alaric and the Goths in 396. What happened when the Goths reached Athens is a debated issue among archaeologists and historians. The scholiast had apparently already read through Zosimos before and knew about that story (which occurs later than the reference here to Sulla), or he went back to this page when he came across the story later. He seems to be taking Zosimos' reference to Sulla's capture of Athens as proof that the pagan gods did not unfailingly protect cities so long as proper rituals were performed.

4.2 *ad Zos. 2.29.4 (f. 38v)* Constantine began to abandon traditional religion by abolishing divination, because he knew it was accurate from its prior prediction of his successes and so feared that it would make negative prophecies about his future.

*You delirious man full of loathsomeness, using what true argument can
you testify to the actual divinity of your deaf-mute gods? Is it that they had
knowledge of future events? Indeed, this is what they themselves yelled out
whenever it was impossible to cleverly guess the truth. Your Apollo, when
some people approached him and were pressuring him to receive an oracle
quickly, responded: "Tone down your force and violence, or I will speak
falsely." Another [god] who was asked said: "Today is not proper to tell the
sacred path of the stars. The abodes of divination among the stars have*

*now been bound fast.” And Hekate, forced to give an oracle under unfavorable atmospheric conditions, pronounced an oracle that was suitable for an intelligence greater than that which you attribute to your gods, saying, “I do not speak, I will shut the gates of the long throat. For at night the Titanic horned goddess advances to the worst cardinal points, having seen evil Ares.” In many other oracles besides they pompously declaim that they deliver oracles through the stars, as if they did not differ at all from horoscope-casters and astrologers, who fall short of the truth by many hundreds of argument-miles.*³⁶

Note: Planoudes’ direct source for these oracles was Ioannes Philoponos, *On the Creation of the World* 4.20 (pp. 444–446), who was using material from Porphyry’s now-lost *Philosophy from Oracles* (a work whose reconstruction has posed many complications for modern scholars). The oracle of Apollo is also in Eusebios, *Evangelical Preparation* 6.5 (241c–d), also mining Porphyry. Christian thinkers in late antiquity had devoted considerable effort to the refutation of pagan oracles, which, as “revealed” texts, could be hyped as pagan counterparts of Scripture, or at least of the Prophets. The Christian line of attack was to show the gods as liars, as limited by material constraints, as all too human, or as relying on astrology, a science that Christians claimed to have debunked. For a later scholion on this same passage of Zosimos, see 6.2 below.

SCHOLIAST 5

Forcina dates this scholiast to the end of the thirteenth century.³⁷ Bianconi suggests that 5.2 and 5.3 might also belong to Planoudes (scholiast 4).³⁸

5.1 *ad Zos. 2.30.1 (f. 38v)* To escape from his unpopularity at Rome, caused by his refusal to celebrate a ritual in the traditional way on the Capitoline, and in order to build his new capital, in 326 Constantine went first to the Troad and then to Byzantion.

Most excellent speechmaker-for-hire, the man who founded such a city did not undertake this project because he observed that he was unpopular among his subjects. You ought to have written that, after building this city, he stripped some of the residents of Rome of their property and imposed death upon others as a penalty for their insults against the blessed

Constantine and his flight from Rome, for which they were responsible who stirred up so much hatred against him. Truly you seem to be like demons and satyrs, who are possessed by Dionysos – which is to say, by manic delirium – and whatever they do or say is shown to be disorderly and incoherent.

Note: The scholiast appears to be giving Zosimos advice on how to write an effective invective against Constantine. Saying that he built a great city out of frustration is silly (“disorderly and incoherent,” he calls it at the end); instead, Zosimos should have made Constantine vindictive and bloody, if he wanted to make him look bad. In Byzantine tradition it was believed that Constantine brought many people and Senators with him from Old to New Rome.

5.2 *ad Zos. 2.45.1 (f. 48r)* Constantius II made his cousin Gallus Caesar in 351 and married him to his sister Constantia either to send him against Persia or to have an excuse to kill him.

Truly you are a speechmaker-for-hire if you can speak such lies against innocent people.

Note: It should be noted that, starting already in the fourth century, Christians disparaged Constantius II as a heretic and condemned him to Hell (he was, like his father at the end of his life, an Arian), but they rallied to his defense when was attacked by pagans in connection with the career of his cousin, colleague, and later enemy Julian.

5.3 *ad Zos. 3.30.2 (f. 74r)* After Julian’s death in 363, Jovian, the new emperor, marched the army to the fort of Souma.

[This was the fort] in front of the one mentioned above.

Note: The scholiast is presumably saying that Souma was in front of the fort from which Persian forces had issued to attack the Romans after Julian had been killed (Zosimos 3.29.3–4); for both forts and the attack, see Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* 25.6.2–4, who calls it Sumere, i.e., Samarra.

SCHOLIAST 6 (NIKEPHOROS GREGORAS)

Forcina dates this scholiast to the end of the thirteenth century or the start of the fourteenth.³⁹ Mazzucchi subsequently identified this hand as that of the scholar, intellectual, mathematician, historian, and theological polemicist Nikephoros Gregoras (ca. 1290–ca. 1360).⁴⁰ He too is known to have used the library in the monastery of Chora and to have written scholia in many of its books.

6.1 *ad Zos. 1.1.1 (f. 1r)* This is the very beginning of the *New History*.

This Zosimos, an idol-worshipper and fervently biased in favor of Julian the Apostate, considered it a most important labor to write false insults against the divine emperor Constantine and praises for the impious Julian, except that he did not manage to conceal completely the successes and stratagems of the divine Constantine, though he insults Constantius also and the great Theodosios as Christians. This accursed Zosimos was hostile to Christians.

Note: Zosimos, or his sources, used both positive and negative sources for Constantine, resulting in a somewhere incoherent picture in the *History*.⁴¹

6.2 *ad Zos. 2.29.4 (f. 38v)* Constantine began to abandon traditional religion by abolishing divination, because he knew it was accurate from its prior prediction of his successes and so feared that it would make negative prophecies about his future.

You crack-brained and brain-dead Zosimos, it was not for the reason that you allege that the greatest Constantine, who is among the saints, abolished the art of divination. You are obviously lying when you level such accusations against that man who was in all ways admirable, you alone, insane person, as you have made lying your first principle in life and slurp up the evil that flows from it, but you are not able to see it. But even if one grants you that, it is possible for anyone who pays close attention here to show that you contradict yourself. You claim that before divine grace dawned over that marvelous man, he often made use of divination, but you confess that as soon as he approached the pure and impenetrable light [Christianity] he removed it far from his presence and cast it into a pit. In this you attempt to cover up the truth but you unexpectedly encounter those who are looking for what is right. It is

obvious that you bring dissonant accusations, as if braiding a rope out of sand, in that you deviate openly from the straight path, now bringing in a counter-suit, now refuting your own claims – a thing not even done by the Hellenes [pagan Greeks] – and then put this together with all your other delirious nonsense. And it seems to me that you did not compose this book of lies for any other reason but only to discredit the God-given doctrine of the Christians, yet you did not realize that you were leaving this wicked book of history of yours, which is hated by God, as a monument to the shame and destruction of your own impiety.

- 6.3 *ad Zos. 4.47.2 (f. 107r)* After defeating Magnus Maximus in 388, Theodosios placed Valentinian II in charge of the western empire.

NB: Theodosios [I] the Great brought Valentinian [II] to the throne.

- 6.4 *ad Zos. 4.59.2 (f. 113v)* After defeating Eugenios and Argobast, in 393 Theodosios I asked the senators in Rome to give up their ancestral rites, but they did not do so because those rites had ensured that Rome remained unconquered for almost twelve hundred years.

Look at the impiety of this accursed writer. He lies openly. For Rome was captured three and four times by its enemies in the years after Romulus.

Note: Gregoras may be alluding to the captures of Rome by Lars Porsena (in some traditions) and by the Gauls in 390 BC. He may also be thinking of Roman civil wars in which the city was captured.

- 6.5 *ad Zos. 4.59.4 (f. 114r)* The death of Theodosios I (in 395).

The end of Theodosios the Great.

- 6.6 *ad Zos. 6.13.2 (f. 152r)* The end of the *New History*.

The present historian Zosimos begins his history from Alexander the Macedonian. He quickly and briefly runs through the events down to Diocletian in a summary fashion. From then on and until Honorios and Arkadios, the sons of Theodosios the Great, his narrative is more expansive.

NOTES

- 1 Krallis, 'Greek Glory.' For Eunapios, Olympiodoros, and their use by Zosimos, see the relevant chapters in Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians*.
- 2 Photios, *Bibliothēke* cod. 98.
- 3 Zosimos, *New History* 2.30–32.
- 4 Respectively Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians*, 109; Karpozilos, Βυζαντινοὶ ἱστορικοὶ καὶ χρονογράφοι, v. 1, 340–341.
- 5 Eustathios' use of Zosimos: Euagrios, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.24; his death: Malalas, *Chronicle* 16.9. Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians*, has argued that Malalas plagiarized Eustathios, who was used independently by Ioannes of Antioch in the seventh century.
- 6 See the papers in Jeffreys et al., eds., *Studies in John Malalas*.
- 7 Euagrios, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.40–41; Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians*, 115 n. 135.
- 8 Photios, *Bibliothēke* cod. 98.
- 9 See the previous chapter. Magdalino, 'Knowledge in Authority,' has argued that the *Excerpta* was a fundamentally Orthodox project, but there is no concern for Orthodoxy in the preface and most of the authors included were pagans, including even some violent anti-Christian ones (such as Eunapios and Zosimos). Unfortunately, we do not know how the excerptors dealt with their most anti-Christian passages. A list of passages that we know they used is given by Forcina, *Lettori bizantini*, 99–102 (none from book 2).
- 10 I owe this point to Marion Kruse.
- 11 Forcina, *Lettori bizantini*.
- 12 Mazzucchi, 'Leggere i classici,' I, 210; Bianconi, 'La biblioteca di Cora,' 415, 434–436.
- 13 Forcina, *Lettori bizantini*, 16, 62.
- 14 Forcina, *Lettori bizantini*, 63–66; also Cantarella, 'Basilio Minimo.'
- 15 Plato, *Theaitetos* 152e.
- 16 Roberto, 'Il Breviarium di Eutropio.'
- 17 E.g., Lieu and Montserrat, *From Constantine to Julian*, 111–112.
- 18 This scholion seems to belong before scholion 1.5, but Forcina has placed it here and I prefer to keep her numbering system than introduce a new one, given the confusion that would cause.
- 19 Forcina, *Lettori bizantini*, 70–71.
- 20 Forcina, *Lettori bizantini*, 72–75; for Xiphilinos the epitomator, see Mallan, 'The Style, Method, and Programme.'
- 21 Kekaumenos, *Strategikon* 5. Cassius Dio was also mentioned in 962 by Theodosios the Deacon in his panegyric poem on *The Conquest of Crete* 1.260, 3.228.
- 22 Psellos in his *Historia Syntomos* (whose editor, at p. xxiii, cannot find direct use of Cassius Dio); see Dzelabdzic, 'Η δημοκρατική Ρώμη'; and Attaleiates in his *Legal Treatise*; see Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, xxiii, 51.
- 23 Markopoulos, 'Roman Antiquarianism.'
- 24 Forcina, *Lettori bizantini*, 72–73.
- 25 Paschoud, *Cinq études*, 184–206.
- 26 For these statues, see Bassett, *The Urban Image*, 90, 150–151.
- 27 Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, esp. ch. 3.
- 28 Radočević, 'The Emperor as Patron of Learning.'
- 29 Psellos, *Chronographia* 6.43.
- 30 Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 220–221.
- 31 Photios, *Bibliothēke* cod. 98.
- 32 Forcina, *Lettori bizantini*, 80–82.

- 33 See Paschoud's edition, v. 1, 68.
- 34 Forcina, *Lettori bizantini*, 85–90. For Planoudes in general, see Fryde, *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance*, 226–267.
- 35 Bianconi, 'La biblioteca di Cora,' 435. Bianconi seems to think that Forcina attributes only 4.2 to Planoudes, and overlooks 4.1 (which he would also attribute to him, in addition to 5.2–3).
- 36 A literary echo of Homer, *Iliad* 2.128.
- 37 Forcina, *Lettori bizantini*, 93.
- 38 Bianconi, 'La biblioteca di Cora,' 435.
- 39 Forcina, *Lettori bizantini*, 94–95.
- 40 Mazzucchi, 'Leggere i classici,' I, 210. Mazzucchi erroneously includes scholion 4.1 (f. 10v) among those of Gregoras: Bianconi, 'La biblioteca di Cora,' 415, 435 n. 101. Pérez Martín, 'El *scriptorium* de Cora,' 211 n. 26 attributes to Gregoras' teacher Theodoros Metochites a scholion on f. 38v (though she does not say which one, or on what grounds) and also "possibly" that on f. 48 (presumably 5.2 above). Canart, 'Additions et corrections,' 48 clarifies that Pérez Martín means scholion 6.2 when she attributes f. 38v to Metochites, but Metochites' involvement has not been demonstrated, so far as I can tell. She also tentatively attributes 5.3 above (f. 74r) to Gregoras. For Gregoras in general, see Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, v. 1, 1–62; and Fryde, *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance*, 357–373.
- 41 Forcina, *Lettori bizantini*, 103–105; for Zosimos on Constantine, see Krallis, 'Greek Glory.'

IOANNES TZETZES' VERSE SCHOLIA ON THUCYDIDES

The Byzantine reception of Thucydides is beginning to attract renewed scholarly attention.¹ With the exception of Theodoros Metochites' essays (see [ch. 6](#)), Byzantine readers generally did not turn to Thucydides in order to learn about the history of the Greek city-states and their wars, which did not interest them much. Instead, Thucydides was a model of (difficult) Attic style and also served as a kind of prose-textbook for writing a particular kind of contemporary history, that is history in the classical style about wars and politics, with speeches and set pieces on sieges, plagues, and the like.² A number of Byzantine historians count as "imitators" of Thucydides in this sense, especially in the early period down to the seventh century (e.g., Priskos of Panion, Prokopios of Kaisareia, Agathias of Myrina, and Theophylaktos Simokattes) and then again in the late period after the mid fourteenth century (e.g., Ioannes Kantakouzenos, the former emperor; Laonikos Chalkokondyles of Athens, and Kritoboulos of Imbros). What we need in these cases are more detailed literary studies which show how these historians adopted Thucydides' language and narrative structures to their own themes and concerns.³

The present chapter is not concerned with such historical adaptations but with the scholia made in the margins of one of the earliest surviving manuscripts of the *History* by a famous classicist and scholar of the twelfth century, Ioannes Tzetzes. Before giving some background on Tzetzes himself, this introduction will broadly situate the concerns that motivated him to write many of his acerbic comments.

At issue was precisely the exemplarity of Thucydides as a prose stylist and a gold standard for Attic vocabulary and grammar. According to one set of

indicators for Byzantine normative standards, these were not in question. For example, an electronic search for the historian's name in the corpus of later Greek writing yields a majority of results in the genre of lexicography. That is, classical words were prescribed on his authority. Also, Photios did not include an entry on him in *Bibliothēke*, presumably because he assumed that his readers, who were all educated men already, would know the *History* by default; but he did offer an implicitly negative verdict on the famous obscurity of his style when he said that some of his successors wrote more clearly, namely Agatharchides, Cassius Dio, and Dexippos.⁴ This brings us to the set of concerns that incensed Tzetzes.

The most negative evaluation of Thucydides in the ancient tradition that was available to Tzetzes and the Byzantines was found in the literary essays of Dionysios of Halikarnassos, a long one among which was dedicated to Thucydides. Dionysios criticizes his chronological, season-by-season structure and the uneven amount of attention that he gave to specific events that seemed to be unrelated to their historical importance; noted certain contradictions; found him too cold and apathetic; but above all found fault with his literary style, which is often uneven and too condensed, resulting in obscurity or confusion. Overall, Dionysios liked Herodotos more, though he was well aware that Thucydides had many followers among the reading public of the Graeco-Roman world and that his own position was probably in the minority.⁵ A detailed response to his views – or, at any rate, to criticisms such as those he had leveled – took the form of a biography of the historian by one Markellinos, probably in the sixth century. This text soon began to accompany manuscripts of the *History*, and prefaced the one that Tzetzes had to correct (see below); it still often prefaces modern editions of Thucydides. This biography is in fact an introduction to the study of Thucydides in the schools of rhetoric of the later Roman empire, and documented the virtues of his style. The historian seems to have been studied in succession after Demosthenes.⁶

We can now situate Tzetzes in this tradition. Holding a manuscript that contained both Markellinos and Thucydides, he basically sided with Dionysios against Markellinos; Tzetzes too preferred Herodotos. So let us now say a few words about Tzetzes himself, the Byzantine scholar whom modern classicists are *most* likely to encounter in learned references and *least* likely to know anything about.

Ioannes Tzetzes was nothing more or less than a professional teacher of

classical Greek language and literature in twelfth-century Constantinople. His life is not easy to reconstruct, but it is not the most important thing about him. He spent his life searching for students and patrons, finding them, losing them, and quarreling with his peers and with plagiarists of his works. His works are an odd assortment, ranging from what I have called “Classics for Dummies,” i.e., accessible summaries and interpretations of classical literature for students of limited intellectual or linguistic background, including foreign-born members of the imperial family, to corrections of old manuscripts and full-blown scholia and commentaries on ancient authors for professional scholarly use (mostly on the poets). It is difficult to attach titles to some of these works, as they are not self-standing, and we still do not have a comprehensive list of them.⁷ The work that modern classicists are most likely to know is the so-called *Histories* or *Chiliades* (“Thousands”), named after the tens of thousands of verses that it takes up. This is a series of stories, anecdotes, vignettes, and various information about antiquity that is written in a more vernacular form of Greek and happens to include (or to allude to) otherwise lost sources, which makes it so useful. It is also maddening because Tzetzes was often quoting from memory and obnoxiously intrudes his opinions and name into every matter conceivable. However, the *Histories* (or *Chiliades*) was designed to serve a specific pedagogical purpose: it was nothing other than a huge commentary on the corpus of Tzetzes’ letters, explaining the multitude of classical references made therein. But there is reason to think that these “letters” too were written as exercises for training in Attic Greek (and it is possible that they had never been delivered to their putative recipients). Tzetzes’ pupils thus practiced Attic prose through the letters and then got their classical learning from the more vernacular and casual notes in the *Histories*.

Even Tzetzes’ annoying personality traits may have a benign explanation. He tended to write in a popular form of verse, which was not usual for ancient or Byzantine classical scholarship, intruded his name everywhere, and insisted on his personal opinions. All this has been interpreted as a strategy to prevent and to neutralize the theft of his intellectual labor, a danger of which he complained on a number of occasions; he tried through all these means to make his work as distinctively and irrevocably Tzetzian as possible.⁸ The scholia on Thucydides, many of which are translated below, exhibit some of these same traits. Tzetzes emerges as no less opinionated on the question of Thucydides’ style too.

THE MANUSCRIPT AND THE SCHOLIA

The Heidelberg manuscript of Thucydides, Palatinus graecus 252 (known as E among modern textual editors of Thucydides), was written in the ninth century, possibly in the palace scriptorium of Constantinople, and may be the earliest exemplar of the *History* that we have. In total it contains the *Life of Thucydides* by Markellinos, the anonymous shorter *Life of Thucydides*, and then the text of the *History* (it is unique among the older manuscripts in containing both *Lives*). It was written soon after the invention and adoption of minuscule in Byzantium so its script seemed archaic by the twelfth century. At some point in the middle of that century, Tzetzes was charged with correcting the text of Thucydides in it, under circumstances and for reasons that we do not know. He may have been working in the palace library, and complains that he was suffering from asthma (see scholion 30). In addition to correcting its flawed orthography and irregular accentuation, he wrote fifty scholia in the margins on various aspects of the text, mostly orthography. These are autograph comments. They can be viewed online as the entire manuscript has been usefully digitized by the Heidelberg library.⁹ They have been meticulously edited, translated, and commented upon by Maria Jagoda Luzzatto, to whose work the present chapter is fundamentally indebted.

Most of Tzetzes' scholia concern rather technical matters of spelling and grammar, which are difficult to reproduce in English. I saw no reason to include all fifty (the numbering system is Luzzatto's). I have concentrated on a selection, but have included all those in which Tzetzes digresses from the matter at hand to give his personal opinion about something, especially if it concerns the style of Thucydides, to talk about himself (his favorite topic), and to polemicize against his professional rivals (his second favorite topic).

In sum, Tzetzes seems to have *hated* Thucydides and revived the worst of the criticisms of his style made by the ancient critic Dionysios of Halikarnassos in his literary essays (see scholia 32, 50). This reflects a refreshing independence of judgment on Tzetzes' part. Thucydides' style was regarded by many educated Byzantines as a touchstone of proper Attic form, and regularly imitated, often badly. Tzetzes had no qualms about affirming a preference for Herodotos and condemning Thucydides for obscurity and a "wooden" style – and he was likely the first person in the whole history of literary criticism to use that particular accusation.

1 *ad Marc. vit. Thuc.* 22 (f. 3r) Markellinos claims that Anaxagoras was among Thucydides' teachers. In the preceding section (21), Markellinos argued that

Thucydides paid informants on both the Spartan and the Athenian side because it was likely that if he paid the Athenians alone they would lie to him and report falsely about the war.

*And you too, Markellinos, write false things.
How can you claim Anaxagoras was the teacher of Thucydides,
when he [Anax.] was old when he taught Euripides?
The son of Xyles [Hdt.] was much earlier than him [Thuc.].
When he [Hdt.] was writing, Thucydides was a child,
and cried when he heard a recitation of the Histories.
Whereupon Herodotos said this to his father:
“Your son, Olouros, has a soul inspired by god.”
Now he [Hdt.] came after Euripides.
Euripides lived in the time of Xerxes.
So how could Thucydides have come before Euripides
when he was still a child when Herodotos was writing his Histories,
which came after the times of Euripides?*

In the left margin, Tzetzes has added:

Herodotos, the son of Xyles, came before Thucydides.

Note: At issue here is a point of chronology that affects the history of master–student relations in ancient Greece. Tzetzes argues that Anaxagoras could not have taught Thucydides because he taught Euripides, who lived during the Persian Wars; Herodotos came after Euripides and Thucydides was a child when Herodotos was composing his *Histories*. Tzetzes makes the same argument in his (verse) commentary on the rhetorical treatise of Hermogenes.¹⁰ Today there is no way to know whether Anaxagoras was Thucydides’ teacher but, *pace* Tzetzes, it was chronologically possible. Anaxagoras lived from ca. 510 to 430, Euripides ca. 480 to 406, and Thucydides ca. 460 to 395. Tzetzes’ mistake is thinking that Euripides lived in the time of the Persian king Xerxes (486–465). This is not so much wrong as misleading.

Tzetzes knows the story about Thucydides crying at the recitation of the *Histories* from Markellinos, *Life of Thucydides* 54. It was a standard anecdote in Byzantium about the two historians, and appears in the *Souda* as well. Finally, the standard spelling of the name of Thucydides’ father was Oloros. Tzetzes is

here following a variant tradition attested also in Photios (*Bibliothēke* cod. 60).¹¹

- 3 *ad Thuc. 1.63.2 (f. 26r)* The ms. here originally had the irregular plural form *hippês* (ἱππῆς) for “horsemen” or “cavalry,” instead of the normalized *hippeis* (ἱππεῖς). In his note, Tzetzes argues for the original reading and modern editors have (implicitly) agreed with him against the normalized spelling of all the other mss. of Thucydides.

Someone has corrected ἱππῆς by writing a diphthong [i.e., -eis].

But you should write it with an eta [η] in the Attic manner.

For that puppy [i.e., Thuc.] wrote in a most Attic way.

So write all the words of this kind with an eta:

hippês, aristês, Phokaês,¹² but not proper nouns.

Proper nouns alone you should write with a diphthong,

I mean Demostheneis [i.e., Demostheneses] and the like.

Note: Tzetzes is correct. The plural of masculine nouns in *-eus* should have the ending *-ês* in authors down to Plato (and is attested in inscriptions until ca. 350 BC).¹³ Tzetzes calls Thucydides a puppy also in scholion 8. Luzzatto attributes this to the story of his weeping when he first heard Herodotos’ *Histories* (see scholion 1, above).¹⁴

- 4 *ad Thuc. 1.63.3 (f. 26r)* This note treats the accentuation of the word *τρόπαιον*, “trophy.” The ms. had the more Attic form *τροπαῖον*, and someone had tried to correct it to the later normalized form. Tzetzes argues in favor of the ms. reading, which in fact modern editors have retained against the later, normalized mss.¹⁵

And don’t write τρόπαιον for τροπαῖον.

I tell you to do this if you want to write in Attic.

But if you want to write in some other dialect,

then write hippeis with a diphthong and τρόπαιον.

- 5 *ad Thuc. 1.85.1 (f. 33v)* Toward the end of his long speech at the Congress of Sparta in book 1, the Spartan king Archidamos exhorts his people not to decide about the war in a brief amount of time. Tzetzes did not believe that such a long speech was appropriate for a Spartan.

*He [Thuc.] imitates a Spartan badly here with this long speech.
For they need say only “if,” or only a bit more,
and that would suffice to wrap up a Spartan speech.*

Note: A standard part of the Byzantine rhetorical curriculum was the *ethopoieia*, an exercise in imitating another person’s manner of speech based on his or her personality and situation. Spartans were not supposed to go on at such length as does Archidamos, so Thucydides is faulted on technical rhetorical grounds, as if he were a student in Tzetzes’ classroom. Previous commentators had marked the difference between the long speech of Archidamos and the laconic one of the ephor Sthenelaïdas in this part of the *History*.¹⁶ To drive the point home, Tzetzes cites one of his favorite anecdotes, known to us only from Plutarch, *Moralia* 511a (*On Garrulity*). Philip of Macedonia once wrote to the Spartans, saying, “If I were to invade Lakedaimon, I would throw your affairs into confusion,” to which they answered, “if ... ,”¹⁷ i.e., we would say “that’s a big if.”

- 6 *ad Thuc. 1.113.1 (f. 41v)* This comment concerns another point of dialectical spelling (cf. scholia 3 and 4 above), specifically of city names such as Chaironeia and Koroneia. Tzetzes here again defends the reading of the older codex against the all other mss. Modern scholars have not agreed with Tzetzes that the spelling should be Chaironia rather than Chaironeia.

*Know that the Ionians, as Tzetzes says,
write Chaironia and Koronia.
They are, therefore, pronounced with an iota in Ionian.
I say that Thucydides also wrote in that way.
This is not implausible: he himself [Thuc.] says in his own account,
as you can find, that the people of Attica were Ionians.*

Note: To defend the unique testimony of his ms., Tzetzes refers to Thuc. 2.15.4, which attributes shared aspects of Athenian and Ionian religion to a common descent. The close relation between the two people/dialects is amply attested in ancient literature and Byzantine commentaries, though the specific forms that are in question here are not attested.¹⁸

- 8 *ad Thuc. 1.123.1 (f. 45r)* This comment concerns a minor grammatical point in the speech of the Corinthians to the Spartans and their allies but leads Tzetzes

into polemical and personal territory, so it is of broader interest. The accepted text at this point reads:

You have it from your ancestors that success is born from hardship, and you should not change that ethic even if you are now a little in advance of them in wealth and power ... There are indeed many reasons for going into war with confidence.

(Tr. Hammond, modified)

The reading in Palat. gr. 252 is (the differences are italicized):

You have it from your ancestors that success is born from hardship, and you should not change that ethic *even if it now seems better with respect to advancing* in wealth and power ... Now then, *go* into war with confidence.

A later hand had tried to correct προφέρεται to προφέρετε and θαρσοῦντες to θαρσοῦντας, which are the forms that modern scholars accept. Tzetzes objected.

*Someone has corrected it here to an epsilon, as you see,¹⁹
making it necessary to change the θαρσοῦντες also
to say θαρσοῦντας, as Tzetzes, laughing, says.
But in no way, my friend, in no way at all should you alter it.
For that is the Attic manner of speaking,
namely to write θαρσοῦντες ἰέναι instead of ἵτε.
To edit, according to technical criteria, the works
of this puppy [Thuc.] and of the ancient and modern writers
is the gift of Tzetzes alone, that “most ignorant one.”
But the gang of “wise” men with their vulgar, mixed up way of life,
out-and-out slanders him [Tzetzes], though he is backed
into a corner at the Stoa and the Dome [schools],
because he does not at all run along with them;
he claims that it is necessary to edit in a technical way
both the works of prose and those in verse,
and never to compromise any of the rules of our art.
For the arts are our sources for a better sort of life.
Whoever wants to cancel out the precepts of the arts
introduces a whole heap of dung into our life,*

*and such a man comes from a pig sty, from primitive barbarians.
 There is a swarm of such people who correct books,
 like the one who corrected the book by Herodotos
 written about the ancestry of Homer,
 converting everything in it that was Ionic
 into whatever he thought best, he who was born so wise!
 For if anywhere it wrote ἐπ' ἡμισείας,
 and later on ἀπικνεῖται, and the like,
 he would wisely change it to a φ to correct the book.²⁰
 He would erase many other such things, in his ignorance,
 here and there making everything all correct and proper.²¹*

Note: This poem contains Tzetzes' longest tirade in this set of scholia against rival scholars, revealing his conceit, paranoid isolation, and sense of being persecuted. We must remember that he was writing this in the margins of one of the oldest copies of Thucydides held in the palace, for all future readers to enjoy ... And it does not help his case that he was wrong on the specific point in question.

The puppy is Thucydides: see the note on scholion 3 above. The Stoa (i.e., the Portico of Achilles) and the Dome (i.e., of Hagia Sophia) were two important schools in twelfth-century Constantinople, the first an imperial foundation and the second under the direction of the patriarch.²² Tzetzes calls the professors of those schools a “gang” in his scholia on other works as well.²³ He attests their proclivity to hypercorrect ancient books and normalize their grammar, a process of which we are the heirs and, in part, the continuers. He refers specifically to a book on the ancestry (or the life) of Homer attributed to Herodotos, a version of which survives.

- 21 *ad Thuc. 3.89.2 (f. 122r)* Thucydides mentions a tsunami at Orobiai (Ὀροβίαι) in Euboia, but Tzetzes has doubts about the spelling of the name, which in this form means “chickpea.” He seems to think it should be written with two omegas (Ὠρωβίαι), like another, better known place-name in Boiotia: Oropos.

*I've heard of an Oropia (Ὠρωπία) in Boiotia.
 “What is now sea used to be part of dry land” [Thuc. 3.89.2]
 but this scribe had made it into the name of a ... legume.*

Note: The scribe was apparently correct about the spelling of this place-name. All the other mss. agree with his reading, as does Strabo, *Geography* 9.2.13.

25 *ad Thuc. 4.8.7 (f. 133v)* Next to the word κλήσειν, Tzetzes had added a note on proper Attic spelling, which this is. He selects a couple of words that use η instead of ει, e.g., κλείθρον would in proper Attic be written κλῆθριν. He then attacks his professional rivals.

*κλῆθρον, κατεκλήσθησαν are written in the Attic manner,
and every one of you thinking men, persuaded by the arguments of Tzetzes
will not write a diphthong [ει], but only an eta.
Leave aside those most ignorant buffalos,
who write these words everywhere with a diphthong,
who call darkness light just as they call light darkness,
bred in the pig sties of the new Circe.*

Note: Tzetzes stopped making comments after this point, until he reached Thuc. 5.12.1: see scholion 26. As for the polemic, note that in scholion 8 he ironically calls himself the “most ignorant” one, and he says that his opponents come from a pig sty, just as he does here. He uses the term “buffalo” in polemics with peers elsewhere.²⁴ “Circe” refers to contemporary pedagogical techniques that have turned scholars into pigs, possibly *schedographia*, a complicated form of exercise in orthography.²⁵

26 *ad Thuc. 5.12.1 (f. 183r)* Tzetzes stopped commenting after the beginning of book 4 and resumed again in book 5 with this notice.

*[A note] by Tzetzes:
After the third book I stopped writing anything significant,
but at this point I resumed writing again.
My last comment had been on κλῆθρον.*

Note: Tzetzes refers back to scholion 25, on Thuc. 4.8.7. Luzzatto has noted the appropriateness of Tzetzes’ reflecting on the chronology of his editorial work next to a passage in Thucydides (here 5.12.1) with a dating formula, specifically marking the end of the summer. Tzetzes was working in the summer, as we find out from a scholion on the verso of the same page.²⁶

- 30 *ad Thuc. 5.15.1 (f. 184v)* This note is not in relation to the text of Thucydides, but contains personal reflections and interesting information about the context of Tzetzes' editorial work.

*What a burden to be accenting and scribbling
and, during the course of each day,
even though I am ailing from this most terrible asthma,
to have to read pages such as these, oh my!,
and to run through a double set of fifty pages.
Therefore, let the junior grooms now carry out and
clean away the dung of this scribe.*

Note: Tzetzes refers to his asthma in one of his letters (*ep.* 88). He also compares the work of bad copyists to the stables of Augeus.²⁷ See also the next scholion. Tzetzes' claim that he read through fifty two-sided pages in one day, namely from f. 133 to 183, is also interesting: see scholia 25–26 above. He “ran through” these pages without making notes on them.

- 31 *ad Thuc. 5.16.2 (f. 184v)* Next to a passage lacking accents and word breaks, Tzetzes lashes out.

The shit of the copyist stinks the worst here.

- 32 *ad Thuc. 5.17.2 (f. 184v)* A parenthetical clause toward the end of 5.17.2 sets Tzetzes off on an attack against the historian's “wooden” and obscure style.

*Know that this formation is called an hypostrophe [turning back].
But you, setting aside the fact that his obscure and hard wooden style²⁸
is pointlessly praised by other teachers of rhetoric,
learn now the precise rule for all historians:
to be clear in a grand way, swift, and persuasive to the full.
It is this one [Thuc.] who should rather be called a Son of the Oak
and the Wood, since he writes history like a carpenter,
and not Herodotos, who is sweet in his narratives.*

Note: Tzetzes is the first person on record to call Thucydides' style “wooden” (see also his “Farewell to Thucydides” below, scholion 50). Tzetzes here attacks those

who praise or defend Thucydides' style, such as his biographer Markellinos.²⁹ The joke in the second half of this scholion is based on the names of the parents of Herodotos as transmitted in the biographical tradition (e.g., the *Souda*). They are Lyxes or Xyles and Dryo. The name of his mother even means "Oak." Tzetzes uses the alternate form of his father's name, Xyles, which means "Wooden."³⁰

- 33 *ad Thuc. 5.18.1–5 (f. 185r)* In the first verses of this scholion, Tzetzes condenses some of the key clauses of Thucydides' account of a treaty between the Spartans and the Athenians in 5.18, picking out words from different places.

*To say "they swore oaths to remain free from harm" [5.18.1, 3],
but then "let there be no bearing of arms" [5.18.4],
well, Tzetzes classifies this as a solecism of speech,
he just can't call this an Atticism.
Writing this way in your convoluted clauses,
you have eluded those who want to scrutinize you on technical grounds.
Just as mud disguises poor work by the mason,
obscurity of writing here masks solecism in speech.*

Note: Tzetzes objects to the sudden switch from "swear an oath" + infinitive to the third-person imperative of 5.18.4.

- 34 *ad Thuc. 5.18.5 (f. 185r)* Tzetzes here signals that he will no longer comment on his objections to Thucydides' style. He addresses Thucydides directly here.

*Your obscurity along with that of the copyist
rouse up such a Charybdis in the narrative.
From now on I am going to race through most of your accounts,
commenting only on what is evident to all;
it is a bitter chore to highlight all the solecisms.*

Note: A flurry of editorial work on folios 184–185, after a long hiatus starting at f. 133v, left Tzetzes discouraged and disinclined to continue at the same pace. He seems to imagine himself here as an Odysseus navigating the straits of Skylla and Charybdis (in scholia 3 and 8 he calls Thucydides *skyllos*, a puppy).

- 35 *ad Thuc. 6.2.4 (f. 214r)* This is a historical scholion on Thucydides' explanation of the name Italy as coming from "Italos, some king of the Sikels. Thus was

Italy named.” Tzetzes picks up from that “thus.”

*No, it wasn't thus, Thucydides, not at all.
A certain bull fled from Herakles
and came out from the sea upon those lands.
Herakles ran everywhere looking for it
and chanced upon a man of barbarian race.
He asked him if he had seen a bull in the lands of those parts,
and he replied that he had seen, not a bull, but an italos,
using his word for bull in his barbarian language.
And so this became the name of this land henceforth.
You, then, ancient historian, whoever you are, fear Tzetzes,
not even a supernatural spirit can get away from him!*

Note: Tzetzes' two sources are Apollodoros, *Bibliothēke* 2.5.10, and Dionysios of Halikarnassos, *Roman Antiquities* 1.35.³¹ The Byzantines, who were Romans and even called themselves Ausones on occasion, were generally interested in the question of the origin of the name of Italy. See, for example, the antiquarian digression in the tenth-century historian Genesios, *On the Reigns of the Emperors* 4.32. Some scholars believe that it comes from Oscan *vitelliu*, 'calf-land.'

36 *ad Thuc. 6.4.3 (f. 215r)* Thucydides claims that the city of Gela in Sicily was founded by Antiphemos of Rhodes and Entimos of Crete, and that it took its name from the river Gelas.³² This affords Tzetzes the opportunity to parade his antiquarian learning, though he does not polemicize against the historian here. The words in parentheses were added by Tzetzes as supplementary scholia to the main scholion.

*Epaphroditos writes the same thing, what you say;
the Gelas was so named because it carries down much frost,
for that is the name that frost has in those lands.
But Proxenos and some others (Hellānikos) say that
the city Gela was named after a certain man, Gelon.
(Gelon was the son of Aitna and Hymaros; thus Theopompos.)
Someone else says that it is from the laughter [gelos] of Antiphemos:
learning from an oracle that he was destined to found a city,
he laughed, thinking that it was unlikely.*

It was from this that he gave the name Gela to the city.

Note: This antiquarian demonstration is based on the entry for Gela in Stephanos of Byzantium's *Ethnika* (Γ 45). Even the abbreviated version of this text that we have contains more information than Tzetzes' summary.³³ The "someone else" of v. 6 (or 7 if you count the suppl. scholion) is Aristainetos.

44 *ad Thuc. 7.44.6 (f. 269r)* The scholion concerns the *paianismos*, which was the singing of the *paian*, the battle cry raised by Greek armies before battle. The mss. have *paionismos*, with an omega, but there were variants (esp. in Herodotos) with an omicron. Modern editors of Thucydides prefer *paianismos*. Tzetzes seized the moment to interject some ethnography.

*But if you write paionismos in the sense of "Bulgarism,"
then know that you should write it with an omicron, never an omega.*

Note: Byzantine writers frequently referred to contemporary peoples by ancient ethnonyms or place-names.³⁴ The Bulgarians were usually called "Mysians," while the Paionians (to whom Tzetzes is alluding here) often stood in for the Hungarians. It is not clear whether Tzetzes literally believed that the Bulgarians of his time, who were subject to the Byzantine empire, were descendants of the ancient Paionians, or whether he was merely explaining how ancient ethnonyms should be used in their classicizing function. In his *Histories (Chiliades)*, he insists that the Paionians are today the Bulgarians and that one should not listen to any of those "buffalos" who claimed that they were identical to any other people.³⁵

50 *at the end of the text (f. 326v)* This is Tzetzes' infamous farewell to Thucydides, probably the most hostile verdict on him ever expressed by a classical scholar. As a colorful and summary appraisal, it has elicited attention and brief commentary of its own.³⁶ Tzetzes repeats some of his accusations from scholion 32 (see above), and echoes the criticisms of Thucydides made by Dionysios of Halikarnassos.³⁷

*The people of Attica should have thrown you, Thucydides,
into a dark pit, along with your book,
and not merely ostracized you to Thrace.*³⁸

*For it appears that you have not recounted what happened in the past
so much as you have hidden what time wrought
by writing your obscure and wooden prose.
Indeed, I myself who in person write these things,
Tzetzes, with my profound knowledge of so many books
and of all the events that you yourself recount here,
feel that I have been stripped of my memory of them all,
as if struck from above and totally stunned
by your convoluted and twisted prose.³⁹
So what might someone else suffer, who doesn't know his history?
Understand the kind of speech that is appropriate for historians:
clear with grandeur, persuasive, and sweet at the same time,⁴⁰
dense where necessary, even if drawn out in some places.*

NOTES

- 1 Reinsch, 'Byzantine Adaptations'; Iglesias-Zoido, *El legado de Tucídides*, 121–133; Kennedy and Kaldellis, 'Thucydides in Byzantium,' citing previous discussions.
- 2 See the Introduction to this volume. Kaldellis, 'The Byzantine Role' and 'The Classicism of Procopius.'
- 3 For a survey, see Reinsch, 'Byzantine Adaptations'; for more detailed analyses, see Adshead, 'Thucydides and Agathias'; Kaldellis, *Procopius*, and *A New Herodotos* (just as much on Laonikos' use of Thucydides).
- 4 Photios, *Bibliothēke* codd. 71, 82, 213.
- 5 Dionysios of Halikarnassos, *On Thucydides*; also the sequel *Letter to Ammaios on the Characteristic Traits of Thucydides*, and the *Letter to Pompeius Geminus*.
- 6 Piccirilli, *Storie*, is a thorough commentary; Burns, 'Marcellinus,' a brief introduction.
- 7 Amazingly, the standard reference work is still the *RE* article (from 1948) by Wendel, 'Tzetzes'; see also Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 301–307, and 'Classical Scholarship'; also Rhoby, 'Ioannes Tzetzes.'
- 8 Budelmann, 'Classical Commentary.'
- 9 http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/de/bpd/virtuelle_bibliothek/codpalgraec.html
- 10 Tzetzes, *Scholia on Hermogenes*, pp. 141–142.
- 11 Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 72 n. 11.
- 12 For this spelling of the Phokaians, see Thuc. 1.13.2.
- 13 Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 70 (section 277b).
- 14 Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 51–52 n. 30 on scholion 8.
- 15 Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 62–63.
- 16 Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 88–89, citing also Hude, *Scholia*, 64, 67, 69.
- 17 Tzetzes cites this in his *ep.* 88 and *Histories (Chiliades)* 4.318–338, 5.336, 12.510.
- 18 Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 65–66.
- 19 i.e., προφέρεται το προφέρετε.
- 20 i.e., he would change them to ἐφ' ἡμισ[σ]είας and ἀφικνεῖται.
- 21 In this verse, Tzetzes includes both the Ionic and the Attic forms, κἀνθαῦτα, κἀνταῦθα.

- 22 Fuchs, *Die höheren Schulen*, 29, 49–50.
- 23 Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 54–55; for the pig sty, see 52 n. 34.
- 24 Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 19 n. 20.
- 25 Cf. Tzetzes, *Histories (Chiliades)* 10.64–75, 12.233–246.
- 26 Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 114.
- 27 Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 27 n. 12, citing *Histories (Chiliades)* 12.240–245 and the scholion to 8.871.
- 28 For Thucydides’ obscurity, see Dionysios of Halikarnassos, *On Thucydides* 46; cf. 32, 52.
- 29 Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 33.
- 30 Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 34–35.
- 31 See the discussion in Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 77; Tzetzes touched on this theme in *ep.* 59 as well as in *Histories (Chiliades)* 2.346–349 (in a scholion)
- 32 Hornblower, *Commentary*, v. 3, 289–290.
- 33 For references to the fragments of the authors quoted here, see the notes to Billerbeck’s edition of Stephanos’ *Ethnika* (v. 1, 412–413), and Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 80–82.
- 34 Kaldellis, *Ethnography*, 106–117.
- 35 Tzetzes, *Histories (Chiliades)* 10.178–179. But in his *Allegories on the Iliad*, proleg. 427, Tzetzes himself identifies the Bulgarians with Achilles’ Myrmidons, in a way that seems to rule out that they can be the same as the Paionians.
- 36 Baldwin, ‘Tzetzes’; Vasilikopoulou, ‘Ἀξιολόγησι,’ 281–284; Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 132–139.
- 37 Scott, ‘The Classical Tradition,’ 61; Baldwin, ‘Tzetzes,’ 314–315; Luzzatto, *Tzetzes*, 136–138; a preliminary translation, based on an inadequate edition, in Stanford, ‘Tzetzes’ Farewell.’
- 38 Technically Thucydides was not ostracized but exiled for twenty years: *History* 5.26. But the anonymous *Life of Thucydides* 7, which follows that of Markellinos in Palat. gr. 252, says that he was ostracized for ten years.
- 39 Cf. scholion 32.
- 40 Cf. scholion 32.

SCHOLIA ON DIODOROS OF SICILY BY NIKETAS CHONIATES AND OTHERS

The universal history of Diodoros of Sicily (entitled *Bibliothēke Historikē*, or *Historical Library*) played a particular role in the selection of ancient Greek historiography preserved by the Byzantines. The work was originally in forty books: the first five recounted the mythical history of the major peoples of the Mediterranean (Egyptians, Assyrians, Indians, Skythians, Arabians, Ethiopians, Amazons, Greeks, and others); the next five surveyed global history from the Trojan War to the Persian Wars; books 11–20 covered history from the Persian Wars to the wars of the first successors of Alexander; and books 21–40 covered Hellenistic and Roman history down to Caesar. What survives more or less intact – that is, what chiefly interested the Byzantines – are books 1–5 and 11–20, which were at some point separated out from the rest of the work and given their own manuscript tradition. (Allegedly a complete manuscript of Diodoros was seen in the palace library as late as 1453.)¹

Our interest here is in the first five books. What they provided to their Byzantine readers was a clearly written, anecdotal, and lightly moralizing survey of the mythical prehistory of the major peoples of the ancient world that did not presuppose the truth of pagan religious claims and Euhemerized divine figures; in addition, Diodoros' preface provided a useful inventory of arguments for writing history that Byzantine historians plundered for ideas.² The first five books were, for Byzantine readers, not only a useful primer for Mediterranean prehistory but a “friendly” pagan companion to ancient debates about cultural priority and religious truth. Many early Christian writers had basically adopted Josephos' polemics (in the *Jewish Antiquities*) against the claims of the Egyptians and Babylonians and extended them, in a way that he could not have done too

overtly, to their polemic against the Greeks. The first five books of Diodoros were thus a handy survey of the main targets of that broad Christian polemic known as apologetic literature. And they also contained curious and exotic information about the customs of distant or long extinct peoples and cultures; we will find that the imagination of our scholiasts, including their sexual and rhetorical imagination, was excited by Diodoros' reports.

Vaticanus graecus 130 was copied in the second half of the tenth century and contains books 1–5 of the *Bibliothēke*. We have no evidence for its use during the subsequent two centuries, but in the second half of the twelfth century it began to receive attention by readers and annotators, some of whom seem to have been working as a “reading group.” They marked out passages for extraction in anthologies, or just marked “NB” when they thought a passage was noteworthy and worth copying or remembering. Carlo Maria Mazzucchi has meticulously edited their notes and scholia to this text and provided detailed commentary on those that merit it. The following translations and discussions are indebted to his work, which deserves to be better known.³

Mazzucchi numbers the hands who wrote anything in the ms. from 1 to 9, with 1 being the original copyist of Diodoros. The focus here will be on those who wrote longer reflective or evaluative scholia, especially poems, the most important of whom was Scholiast 3, the high official and historian of Byzantium Niketas Choniates (on whom, see below). I will retain Mazzucchi's numbering for the convenience of scholarly cross-reference. Therefore, the first hand who added comments to the ms. becomes my Scholiast 2. Scholiasts 4a–c of the early Palaiologan period and Scholiast 6 (who was Nikephoros Gregoras) did not write comments of sufficient length or independent interest to be included here. Scholiast 4a added into the margins extracts from Ktesias' *Indika* from Photios' *Bibliothēke* (cod. 72) while Gregoras added Photios' entry on Diodoros (cod. 70) as a preface to the text.⁴

Diodoros was a popular author in the twelfth century, and was cited in the scholarship of Tzetzes and Eustathios of Thessalonike.⁵ Niketas Choniates modeled the preface of his *History* on the arguments in favor of history that he found in Diodoros.⁶ The scholia in Vat. gr. 130 attest to the variety of responses that Diodoros elicited from Byzantine readers, including simple expressions of incredulity, reasoned evaluations of the evidence, antiquarian commentaries, moralizing aphorisms, and reflections on the sad state of the Byzantine empire in the later twelfth century. Mazzucchi suspects that Scholiasts 2, 2a, and 3, and

other readers who are named within, formed a circle of learned friends who were studying this text in some kind of joint project.⁷ The conquest of the City by the Fourth Crusade in 1204 put an end to that world by dispersing and destroying it.

SCHOLIAST 2

Mazzucchi dates this reader to the last quarter of the twelfth century. Scholiast 2 copied extracts from the text into the margins (presumably for future reference) and made many notes next to passages that interested him, including two scholia in verse (2.3, 2.4). He was especially moved by *ekphraseis* of places (2.5, 2.8).⁸ He also preserves one of the first possible notices of the presence of Roma (Gypsies) in Europe (2.1).

2.1 *ad Diod. 1.80.1–2 (f. 63v)* Thieves in Egypt had a guildmaster, and all stolen goods were deposited with him. The victims of theft could recover their goods by paying to him one fourth of their value.

Note this regarding the Egyptian thieves. The same happens today among the thieves who live in Macedonia and are called “Egyptians.” They go around thieving and, when they are caught, they do not deny it but confess it, and ask to be paid for their thievery, which they call “bold lad’s wages” [παλικάριατικόν].

Note: Mazzucchi proposes that this is the earliest attestation of the presence of Gypsies in Europe. Called Roma or Romani today (not because of any link to the western Roman tradition), they were originally of Indian origin and migrated west at around this time. “Gypsy” comes from “Egyptian,” which is what they were believed to be, and were called, in the west and Byzantium.⁹ In modern Greek, *pallikari* means a bold lad; it derives from ancient *pallakion*, which meant a male youth (probably before adolescence).

2.2. *ad Diod. 2.3.4 (f. 81r)* Ninos, king of the Assyrians, founded a great city and named it “Ninos” after himself.

[NB] that Ninos called this city Ninos after himself, which, I think, is the same as the Nineveh mentioned in the Hymns.

Note: Scholiast 2 is linking Diodoros' city Ninus with Nineveh. It is a typical illustration of the Byzantine instinct to coordinate classical and Biblical references.

2.3 *ad Diod. 2.23.2–3 (f. 97r)* Sardanapallos, the last king of the Assyrians, led an effeminate lifestyle and slept with both men and women.

You will be punished twice-over, double-sinner.

Note: In classical and Byzantine convention, the quasi-mythical Assyrian king Sardanapallos exemplified hedonism and living for the moment. It is likely that the “double-sinning” in question (a term that does not appear elsewhere) refers cleverly to the king's bisexuality, which is highlighted in the text of Diodoros.

2.4 *ad Diod. 3.28.1–2 (f. 143v)* The ostrich (*strouthokamelos*, or “sparrow-camel”) was eaten by the Strouthophagoi, who lived south of the Ethiopians. Diodoros describes the bird fairly accurately, though he does not state its name here.

*You write unclear things obscurely, you contriver of exotic reports;
you don't actually give the name of the bird;
from now on I believe that you don't know what even you are writing.
So why do you instruct us about this bizarre creature,
which you yourself don't know? You are just recording a tall tale.*

Note: Diodoros had in fact given the ostrich's (Greek) name at 2.50.3, a passage marked by Scholiast 2! (He wrote in the margin, “x: *ekphrasis* of the compound animals found in it [i.e., Arabia]”.)

2.5 *ad Diod. 3.68.5 (f. 180r)* Diodoros gives a detailed description of the natural beauties of the city Nysa, where Ammon, king of Libya, hid Dionysos, his son born of Amaltheia.

Note how beautiful the entire ekphrasis of this place is.

2.6 *ad Diod. 4.49.1–2 (f. 224r)* The Argonauts on their return journey came to Byzantion, which was still being ruled by its founder, Byzas. They established altars at the mouth of the Black Sea and honored the gods.

X [note] that in the time of Byzas the Argonauts went off to Kolchis; and that they sanctified the place which even now is still honored by those who sail past there; this is the place later renamed Anaplous, where there is a conspicuous church of the archangel [Michael].

Note: Polybios, *History* 4.39.6, claims that the Black Sea begins at Hieron, on the Asiatic side of the Bosporos, where Iason sacrificed to the twelve gods on his return from Kolchis. Anaplous was on the European side where the Bosporos joined the Black Sea. In Byzantine times there was church of St. Michael there and another one a bit to the south, at Hestiai, also on the European side.¹⁰ The second-century AD geographer Dionysios of Byzantion wrote a description of the Bosporos called the *Anaplous*, where he records many sites of interest linked to, or named after, Iason's passage through the straits. Niketas Choniates notes that the emperor Isaakios Angelos (1185–1195) restored the church at Anaplous at great expense, and it is likely that our scholiast had this in mind.¹¹

2.7 *ad Diod. 5.31.3 (f. 273v)* The Gauls are known to perform human sacrifices for the purposes of divination when it comes to important matters. These are carried out by the Druids, their “philosophers,” who read the future in the twitchings of the victim.

Note what a foul and inhuman thing they do to a man, who suffers the same way they do.

2.8 *ad Diod. 5.43.1 (f. 282v)* Diodoros gives a detailed description of the lush plain around a temple of Zeus on a (legendary) island of Arabia Felix. As in scholion 2.5, the scholiast is taken by the rhetorical qualities of the text.

Note the beauty of the ekphrasis of the place.

SCHOLIAST 2A

This reader commented on only a few pages of Ethiopian material in Diodoros. He was also writing at the end of the twelfth century, and Mazzucchi suspects that the manner of his interventions show him to have been collaborating with Scholiast 2, or to have been reading the text with him.¹² Scholiast 2a was skeptical of some of the Ethiopian material. Mazzucchi unfortunately does not

give exact folio numbers for this scholiast's interventions. At any rate, they are all between 127v–134v.

2a.1 *ad Dion. 3.5.3* Ethiopians condemned to death would be sent the sentence of death by the king and would then commit suicide in their own homes. When one of them thought to flee, his mother put her belt around his neck and he allowed her to strangle him.

A feat of endurance truly worthy of a son who loves his mother! And what a good example set thereby for future generations!

2a.2 *ad Dion. 3.7.1* When the Ethiopian king is maimed, his companions suffer the same loss voluntarily; Diodoros calls this a strange custom.

A most irrational Ethiopian custom; it comes close to being unbelievable too.

2a.3 *ad Dion. 3.11.2* Diodoros mentions authors who have written on Egypt and Ethiopia, including Agatharchides and Artemidoros of Ephesos (fl. ca. 100 BC).

Take note that Artemidoros of Ephesos wrote a geography of the world, just like Strabo.

Note: It is possible the scholiast identified the geographer with his namesake Artemidoros of Ephesos, author of the *Oneirokritika* (second century AD).

SCHOLIAST 3 (NIKETAS CHONIATES)

Mazzucchi has made a convincing case that Scholiast 3, who wrote seventeen poems in the margins of the ms. in addition to a number of smaller notes, was none other than the high Byzantine official and historian Niketas Choniates. The scholiast was moved by various passages of Diodoros to reflect on the decrepit state of the Byzantine empire in terms that resonate powerfully with Choniates' *History*, even on a verbal level; moreover, some of the scholia date exactly to the spring or summer of 1203, when the fleet of the Fourth Crusade appeared before Constantinople and invested it. The scholiast is interested in the world of high officialdom and the Byzantine armed forces, in the outrages being perpetrated by the Italians on his people, and he also has a deeply ironic sensibility that indulges

in reversals. Mazzucchi adduces a number of circumstantial details that flesh out this profile and connection, concluding that Choniates was Scholiast 3.¹³ To these considerations may be added the fact that Choniates imitated Diodoros when he wrote the preface to his *History*.¹⁴

Niketas was from Chonai in Asia Minor (ancient Kolossai, to which Paul's epistle To Colossians is addressed). He was the younger brother of Michael, who had preceded him to Constantinople, studied under the Homeric scholar and professor of rhetoric Eustathios, and finally been appointed bishop of Athens.¹⁵ Niketas followed Michael to the capital, where he too studied classical literature and eventually joined the civil administration. He attained high office under the Angeloi emperors (1185–1204), advised them on matters of policy, and wrote speeches praising them. He also began writing a history from the death of the emperor Alexios I Komnenos in 1118 down to his own time. But his career and the writing of the *History* were interrupted by the events of the Fourth Crusade and the destruction of Constantinople. Niketas was in the imperial capital (and apparently reading Diodoros) during the year 1203–1204 when the western armies were encamped outside the City and trying to extort money from their weak Byzantine hosts. He had to go into exile when the City fell to their assault in April 1204, and ended up a refugee at Nikaia, home of one of the Byzantine successor states. He there wrote more speeches for the new Laskarid emperors and revised and updated his *History*, making it more critical of the Komnenoi and Angeloi emperors than its earlier versions had been.¹⁶

Niketas' *History* is one of the masterpieces of Greek historiography and stands well in comparison to any of its classical models and Byzantine peers. It has a subtle style, as Niketas carefully chose and blended together ancient and Biblical allusions to create a nuanced and ironic narrative. At his hands, reality is constantly shifting and reversing itself and the reader is taken through a roller-coaster ride of outrage, grief, cynicism, and wry humor.¹⁷ The work deserves to be studied by classicists as an example of what the Byzantines were enabled to accomplish by their close reading and "imitation" of ancient literature. As we noted above, Niketas' preface reworks ideas from Diodoros of Sicily, while the opening of the work is modeled on the opening of Xenophon's *Anabasis*. Niketas' chief characters thereafter are adjusted to the profiles of figures from ancient and Biblical literature, in nuanced and always intelligent ways.

The following are Niketas' comments – also wry and often ironic – as he was reading Diodoros during the fateful year 1203–1204.

3.1 *ad Diod. 1.75.7 (f. 60r)* The Egyptians took meticulous care in choosing their thirty judges for the entire land, and the chief justice among them. He wore a golden chain around his neck with pendant of precious stones called the Truth, which he would place upon the plea which contained the stronger case.

*Chief justice of the present day,
let not the scorn of a patrician woman sting you.
You have history here as an archetype;
and the image of precious stones,
a pendant around the chief judge,
will shut the jester's abusive mouth.*

Note: Diodoros' account of the great authority and respect commanded by the chief judges of ancient Egypt evidently led Choniates to think upon an episode from the contemporary Byzantine courts in which a patrician woman spoke with disrespect to the chief justice, possibly an acquaintance of Niketas.¹⁸ A *patrikia* was a court title, not an office, and it referred to the wife of a *patrikios*. Mazzucchi has usefully collected references to torques, chains, and pendants that some high officials wore in Byzantium, though we cannot always exactly identify the items to which the technical terms refer.¹⁹

3.2 *ad Diod. 1.88.5 (f. 69v)* The Egyptians honored bulls as sacred, unless they were red in color like Typhon, in which case they were allowed to sacrifice them. They also sacrificed red-headed men, though few were to be found among the Egyptians, which is why stories of the sacrifice of strangers spread among the Greeks.

Now that I have grown old, I am not afraid of this custom.

Note: The author presumably had blond-reddish hair, a type that he attributes to various characters in his history and orations, as hair color was something that he played up in delineating people's character.²⁰ Now that his had turned white, even though he was only ca. 45–50 years old, he (jokingly) claims not to fear this Egyptian custom. That he had white hair is revealed in scholion 3.12.

3.3 *ad Diod. 2.5.6 (f. 82v)* Ninos, king of the Assyrians, set out to conquer the

Bactrians with a huge army numbering, according to Ktesias, 1,700,000 infantry, 210,000 cavalry, and 10,600 chariots. Diodoros defends this number, which might otherwise, he admits, seem untrustworthy (*apiston*), by citing the large extent of Asia and the campaigns of Darius, Xerxes, and Dionysios, the tyrant of Syracuse, who set out on one of his campaigns with 120,000 infantry and 400 longships from but one of the city's harbors. Scholiast 2 had already commented next to this passage: *Note what this historian says about the longships that came out of a single harbor of Sicily: it does indeed seem unbelievable (apiston) to me.* Choniates adds to that previous comment.

*You are right to disbelieve this; especially if you consider
the current state of the harbor of Byzantion
facing down the innumerable ships of the Italians,
that are so hard to ram: it can barely muster twenty ships.*

Note: This scholion could only have been written after the arrival of the fleet of the Crusaders, consisting mostly of Italian ships, in late June 1203. The Italians had well over two hundred ships.²¹ In his *History*, Niketas says that their fleet consisted of 110 horse-carrying dromons, 60 longships, and over 70 transports.²² To oppose them, he says that the Byzantines could barely muster twenty rotten, small, and worm-eaten skiffs left, which matches the testimony of the scholion.²³ Their harbor in question was in the Golden Horn, which could be closed off with a chain.²⁴ But Choniates need not have been so skeptical. We know, in part from his own testimony, that the emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180) had sent large fleets with hundreds of ships against the Normans, the Egyptians, and the Venetians.²⁵

3.4 *ad Diod. 2.13.4 (f. 89r)* Semiramis, queen of Babylon, did not want to contract a regular marriage out of fear of being supplanted. She would sleep with the best looking of her soldiers, then do away with them.

*What an end to the marriage for those wrongly united – if it is death!
Stay away from the clandestine beds of queens.*

Note: Mazzucchi translates *phthora* in the first line as “rape,” for the word can mean that in a sexual context, as it can refer to any sexual pollution generally.

But it can also mean “death,” “destruction,” which is what I think the poem is about: the evil end of those who have secret affairs with queens. Scholiast 5 (see below), who read Choniates’ comment, had the same reaction: he thought that the thrust of Diodoros’ passage was about the death of the queen’s lovers. What was wrong about the affair was not that it was an illicit sexual union but that it resulted in death for the men involved.²⁶ As a historian of the twelfth-century court, Choniates had to record many royal affairs, none of which ended well, and some ended in death too.

3.5 *ad Diod. 2.40.3 (f. 110v)* The caste of the philosophers is held in great esteem among the Indians. At the beginning of the year, before a grand assembly, they make predictions about the weather and other useful matters. Anyone among them who makes false predictions is held in low repute and must remain silent for the remainder of his life. Choniates begins with a note, which is followed by his poem.

*Our astrologers should see this!
For those of our time, then, complete and total silence
is appropriate henceforth; they should be mute for life.
They neither know anything good in a complete way
nor do they proclaim it fully.*

Note: In his *History*, Choniates depicts a world addicted to astrology and various forms of divination, and even emperors (such as Manuel Komnenos) considered themselves experts in these sciences. Predictions were a staple of historiography since antiquity, and Choniates uses many to foreshadow, dramatize, undermine, satirize, or wax sarcastic.²⁷ He is being sarcastic in this passage too, but here, as in the *History*, it is not clear whether he rejects the basic assumptions of divination in their entirety or doubts that contemporaries had truly mastered them, making them charlatans.

Diodoros’ list of the castes of Indian society allows Choniates to comment successively on astrologers, farmers, and soldiers in the course of two pages. The following two scholia relate to the same discussion.

3.6 *ad Diod. 2.40.5–6 (f. 111r)* Indian farmers and shepherds do not go into the city. They live in the country and bring it under cultivation.

*What happy men! They live far from
urban commotions, and have a pleasant life.
They have an uncomplicated manner and are naturally free;
they avoid the nets of duplicitous entrapment.*

Note: This poem perfectly captures the ideological dissonance of the urban life that men of Choniates' class valorized, similar to that of many ancient writers. They could not bear to live outside of Constantinople, the largest city of their world, and complained bitterly when they had to live anywhere else among the boorish locals.²⁸ But they simultaneously took a satirical and moralizing view of big-city life (as did Choniates in his *History*),²⁹ and they also affected to be drawn to the simple and ostensibly care-free life of the peasantry. This was an ancient conceit that fueled, for example, pastoral literature and was responsible for many texts and ideals in the classical corpus.³⁰ (Yet anthropological studies of village and pastoral life show it to be just as complicated and duplicitous as its urban counterpart.) Byzantine variations on this theme used monastic retreat as its idealized escape, but there is no indication that our scholiast was drawn to that option.

3.7 *ad Diod. 2.41.2 (f. 111r)* The fifth Indian caste is that of the soldiers. They enjoy leisure and games in times of peace and are maintained by the royal treasury.

*Today too soldiers receive from the emperors
the gift of bountiful supplies.
But ours are leisurely even when drawn up for battle,
practiced as they are in living without danger.*

Note: Choniates again compares what he reads in Diodoros to the state of his own society, and finds the latter wanting, reinforcing the picture of decadence that his scholia are painting. In his *History*, Choniates likewise comments on the decline of the fighting quality of the Byzantine armies. Mazzucchi suggests that he may have been thinking here of a specific Byzantine defeat by the Crusaders following the latter's arrival before Constantinople.³¹

3.8 *ad Diod. 4.70.3 (f. 241r)* Diodoros here recounts the myth of the Centaurs and Lapiths and the battle that ensued between them when the Centaurs got

drunk at the wedding of Perithous and Hippodameia and began to rape Lapith women.

*Behold, even the myth indicts the effects of drunkenness.
The Lapith kills his drunken
kinsmen, who lust after women in their cups
and receive death as the prize of intoxication.*

- 3.9 *ad Diod. 4.71.1–2 (f. 241v)* Asklepios brought men back from the dead through his healing art, so Hades brought charges against him before Zeus for infringing on his realm. Zeus killed Asklepios with a thunderbolt.

*To the heirs of Asklepios [doctors] let him now give his gratitude,
he, the omnivorous beast, the dragon of ten thousand maws [Hades],
because they kill even those who are not mortally ill,
expanding the province of people's [final] destination.*

Note: This is yet another ironic scholion by Choniates premised on a reversal of perspective. Asklepios is the hero of Diodoros' account, but Choniates implies that Hades had no cause to feel unjustly deprived of victims by the art that the alleged healer established. The underlying idea, that doctors kill more people than they save, is typical of premodern anti-medical polemic.³²

- 3.10 *ad Diod. 4.71.4 (f. 242r)* Asklepios' sons Machaon and Podaleirios joined in the expedition against Troy but were "granted exemption from the dangers of battle" because of their healing services to the Greek army.

*They are now exempt from the dangers of battle;
cruel toll-collector(s), they extract the bitter tribute.*

Note: It is unclear how the second line should be read. Mazzucchi takes its first words (πικρῷ τελώνῃ) as datives, though he does not print them that way, and translates, "they gather up the tribute for the cruel toll-collector." He takes this to refer to the extra taxes that those who did not serve in the imperial armies had to pay, and cites passages from the period which show that the Byzantines found tax-collection to be a cruel process.³³ Another possibility is that those words are in the dual, referring to the two sons of Asklepios. The meaning depends upon the preceding scholion 3.9: as doctors they still kill more people than they save,

which is the bitter tax that they are collecting (i.e., for Hades).

3.11 *ad Diod. 5.17.4–18.1 (f. 264v)* The people of the Balearic islands do not allow money of gold and silver in their land. At weddings, the relatives have sex with the bride in descending order of age, and the groom is last to do so. The islands are Gymnesiai in Greek, because the inhabitants go naked in the summer.

*Thanks be to the Gymnesioi for going without money!
But stay away from their foolish approach to weddings,
even if it would otherwise be wished for by those enjoying the party!*

Note: The first verse is a parody of a religious thanksgiving and benediction. The last verse is a parody of a prayer (εὐκτόν).³⁴ Choniates is having fun here with the sexual and religious transgressions involved. It gets even worse in the following scholion.

3.12 *ad Diod. 5.18.1 (f. 265r)* Choniates is not finished with the wedding customs of the inhabitants of the Balearic islands (the Gymnesioi); see scholion 3.11 above.

*If the customs of the Gymnesioi regarding weddings
were maintained down to our time,
I too would gladly swim over to them,
even though I suffer more at sea than everyone else
and have white hair due to age.
But I would never choose to be the groom in this case,
even if they were all entwined in the bridal chamber of the Tyndarid.*

Note: Tyndareos was the father of Helen, who married Menelaus, so Choniates is imagining all the guests at that famous wedding (basically all the Greek heroes and kings) having a turn with her in the manner of the Gymnesioi. But he would not want to be Menelaus in that context. The form Tyndaris for Helen of Troy is rare, but it is the form that Choniates uses in his *History*, when he describes the statues destroyed by the Crusaders in 1204. He praises the beauty and sexuality of the statue of Helen that was not spared destruction.³⁵ One of the obstacles that Choniates says would not prevent him from making the journey was his white

hair (i.e., his old age) – but this would precisely be an asset when he reached the islands, for the old have sex with the bride first (see scholion 3.11).

3.13 *ad Diod. 5.35.3 (f. 277r)* The Pyrenees were named after a great fire once set by the locals that burned the forests and created streams of silver. The poem has no apparent relation to the passage that it adjoins.

*Where are the children? And where is the solemn attire?
I am expected at my burial to be properly dressed in black.*

Note: As the epigram has no relation to the adjoining text of Diodoros, it is not easy to guess what the scholiast is thinking about. *Schema mega*, that is, a grand or solemn outfit or uniform can refer to monastic garb, court attire, apparel for a religious occasion (even burial), and the like. Are the *paidia* biological offspring, pages-attendants, or servants (even adult ones could be so called)? Mazzucchi suggests that Choniates was inspired to write this grim (albeit still ironic) poem by the great fires that tore through Constantinople in July and August of 1203, as he was reading the text. The second fire destroyed many homes, possibly even including his own palace, thus Diodoros' description of the fires that christened the Pyrenees in Spain moved Choniates to contemplate his own death.³⁶

3.14 *ad Diod. 5.35.4 (f. 277r)* This is the continuation of the previous passage: as the natives of the Pyrenees did not value silver, the Phoenicians bought it from them in exchange for little and became rich. They carted so much silver away from Spain that they would even replace the lead on their anchors with silver to take more of it.

*Their own deficiency meant profit for the silver-merchants.
For otherwise they would have taken the ships
with their cargoes and merchants, and sailed off.*

Note: In the first line, *apousia* can mean an “absence” or a “lack of value.” It is a paradox, because the merchants gain from it. It may refer to the anchors, which had no value until they were changed to silver by the Phoenicians, becoming an additional source of profit. But it is not then clear who the subject of the rest of the poem is. Who would have seized the ships and sailed off? Mazzucchi thinks that the whole poem refers to the twelfth-century pirates: contemporary dealers in silver are lucky because they do *not* have so much as to make anchors from it

and thereby attract pirates, who would carry away their ships, cargo, sailors, and all; therein lies the paradox of how they profit from a deficiency.³⁷ This scholion would benefit from additional analysis.

3.15 *ad Diod. 5.40.4–5 (f. 281r)* The Etruscans have lost their ancestors' way of life and spend their time drinking and in unmanly entertainments; they have thereby lost their ancestral military glory.

*Such is the fruit of heavy drinking;
luxurious easy living extinguishes ancestral glory.
Soldier, avoid this unmanly indolence,
which knows well how to destroy an ancient glory.*

Note: Choniates again turns Diodoros' text into a meditation on contemporary decline and extracts a moralizing lesson for the future. The state of the twelfth-century Byzantine army preoccupied him both in these scholia and in his *History* (cf. scholion 3.8, on drunkenness). In the *History*, Choniates says precisely that the Latins found the empire weak from drunkenness, luxury, and easy living.³⁸

3.16 *ad Diod. 5.67.4 (f. 298r)* The goddess Themis first introduced the modes and orders of religion and law, whence the guardians of the laws of gods and men are called *thesmophylakai* and *thesmothetai* ("guardians" and "establishers of the lawful order," respectively).

*Even if a city was fortunate enough to have founders of order,
a city formerly of strength, but now full of tears,
would it not be subjected by Italian arms?
For those who discovered how to guard their order,
become weak without someone to defend them.*

Note: The final two verses suggest a negative answer to the rhetorical question posed by the first three. Even though Byzantium was founded on the basis of good laws, it has lacked defenders to protect it from Italian aggressors. This perfectly matches the outlook of Choniates' *History*, which traces the Byzantine transition from "strength" to "tears."³⁹ His account of the events after the Fall of the City, which Niketas wrote while in "exile" at Nikaia, begins with a discussion of Solon, the Athenian lawgiver, which emphasizes that even if the laws are laid

down well at the beginning, the state requires continued vigilance and defense thereafter to stave off tyranny and foreign conquest.⁴⁰

3.17 *ad Diod. 5.79.1 (f. 306v)* Rhadamanthys of Crete made Oinopion, the son of Dionysios and Ariadne, the governor of the island of Chios.

*It was good for Oinopion to have the rule over Chios.
What other command would have been more appropriate?
But the Dog is going to imprison the word,
as a thing useful for learned and witty banter,
which sufficed to brighten and warm our table.
And may I often again indulge in its pleasures!
A small consolation it is in my great distress,
for which the armed hands⁴¹ of the Italians is responsible,
which mixed urbanites up with mountain roughnecks.*

Note: The root of Oinopion's name is the word for wine, and Chios was famous since antiquity for its wines, which is why his posting there was appropriate. As for the following verses, Mazzucchi brilliantly observed that Oinopion's friend was the hunter Orion, whose dog Seirios gave his name to the star, also known as the Dog, the brightest star in the night (actually a binary star system 8.6 light-years away). Its earliest rising was dated to 19–20 July, a date with portentous significance. Choniates here takes it to refer to the capture of the *lexis*, "word," which Mazzucchi suggests is Constantinople, which Choniates presents in his *History* as a center of learned culture and discourse. The Dog, then, refers to the Latins. "Rabid dogs" was a contemporary Byzantine image for barbarians.⁴² In fact, the Crusaders took parts of the City for the first time on 17–18 July, 1203, before they were appeased by a change of leadership in the palace. The rest of the epigram laments the destruction of learned culture caused by the Latin attack and hopes for its eventual restoration. The Dog, of course, would have no use for learned word-play, precisely the sort of word-games that associated Oinopion with Chios.

SCHOLIAST 5

In the later thirteenth or, more likely, early fourteenth century, a reader of the

ms. wrote a poem in it about the murderous unions of Queen Semiramis.⁴³

5.1 *ad Dion. 2.13.4 (f. 89r)* Semiramis, queen of Babylon, did not want to contract a regular marriage out of fear of being supplanted. She would sleep with the best looking of her soldiers, then do away with them.

*Reader, flee from such marriages as with Semiramis,
for they bring death to those who partake of them.
May women and marriage be gone from our lives,
if they bring death to those who partake of them.
O Semiramis, if marriage was to your liking,
why then kill off the best looking grooms?
But if they caused you grief, then forswear marriage
and take pity on the handsome sight of young men.*

Note: This same passage had been commented upon by Choniates: see scholion 3.4 above.

NOTES

- 1 Konstantinos Laskaris, *De scriptoribus Graecis Patria Siculis* in PG 161: 917–918.
- 2 Lieberich, *Studien zu den Proömien*.
- 3 Mazzucchi, ‘Leggere.’
- 4 Losacco, ‘Circolazione e riuso,’ 486–489.
- 5 Mazzucchi, ‘Leggere,’ 185.
- 6 See Scholiast 3 below.
- 7 Mazzucchi, ‘Leggere,’ 192–197.
- 8 Mazzucchi, ‘Leggere,’ 179–180 (extracts), 180–181 (notes and poems), 184 (*ekphraseis*), 185–186 (date).
- 9 Soulis, ‘The Gypsies.’
- 10 Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, 468, 471; Mazzucchi, ‘Leggere,’ 183 n. 61.
- 11 Choniates, *History* 442.
- 12 Mazzucchi, ‘Leggere,’ 186–188.
- 13 See esp. Mazzucchi, ‘Leggere,’ 254–255; accepted by Simpson, ‘From the Workshop,’ 264–265.
- 14 Lieberich, *Studien*, v. 1, 29; v. 2, 28–29.
- 15 For Michael Choniates, see Kaldellis, *The Christian Parthenon*, 145–165.
- 16 For the life and works of Niketas Choniates, see now Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*.
- 17 See the papers in Simpson and Efthymiades, eds., *Niketas Choniates*.
- 18 For the contemporary Byzantine courts, see Gkoutzioukostas, *Η απονομή δικαιοσύνης*; for the titles of the chief judges, see Mazzucchi, ‘Leggere,’ 219–220.
- 19 Mazzucchi, ‘Leggere,’ 220–221.
- 20 Mazzucchi, ‘Leggere,’ 224, with references to blond and red-haired individuals in this era.
- 21 Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 68–69.
- 22 Choniates, *History* 539.

- 23 Choniates, *History* 541; the expression (not the number) is taken from Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead* 20.1.
- 24 Choniates, *History* 595.
- 25 Choniates, *History* 77, 160; Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, 105; Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 225 n. 79; for Byzantine ships and fleets, see Pryor and Jeffreys, *The Age of the ΔΡΟΜΟΝ*.
- 26 Cf. Paolo Cesaretti's pers. comm. in Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 227.
- 27 See the passages discussed by Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 229–230; Magdalino, 'Prophecy and Divination.'
- 28 Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 235, for the twelfth century.
- 29 Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 231. Every aspect of Choniates' outlook was complicated: Kaldellis, 'Niketas Choniates.'
- 30 See many of the papers in Fantuzzi and Papanghelis, eds., *Brill's Companion to Greek and Latin Pastoral*.
- 31 Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 232, citing Choniates, *History* 542; he also cites the passages illustrating Choniates' view of the Byzantine army.
- 32 For other expressions of this idea from the twelfth century, and contemporary literary images of Hades as a beast, see Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 235–236.
- 33 Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 210, 236–237.
- 34 Well noted by Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 237; cf. the similar custom of Libyan people in Herodotos, *Histories* 4.172.
- 35 Choniates, *History* 652.
- 36 Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 242; cf. Choniates, *History* 545, 553–555.
- 37 Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 243.
- 38 Choniates, *History* 541; additional passages are cited by Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 244–245.
- 39 Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 246–249, for a survey.
- 40 Choniates, *History* 583–585.
- 41 The same expression is used in Choniates, *History* 197, 602, 617.
- 42 Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 250–251.
- 43 Mazzucchi, 'Leggere,' 202.

THEODOROS METOCHITES AND THE GREEK HISTORIANS

Theodoros Metochites was the leading intellectual of the first quarter of the fourteenth century, a leadership that was solidified and enhanced by the fact that he also had a brilliant political career which ultimately included the position of prime minister (*megas logothetes*) to the emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328). He was born in Constantinople but was raised at Nikaia, the former capital of the empire-in-exile during the period of Latin rule in Constantinople (1204–1261), because his father Georgios was out of favor at the court. The rhetorical abilities of the young Theodoros came to the attention of Andronikos II around 1290 and he was allowed to return to Constantinople, where he rose in the ranks of the court and government. He was made *megas logothetes* in 1321, but fell from power when Andronikos himself was dethroned by his grandson, Andronikos III (1328–1341). Metochites was sent to exile at Didymoteichon, then returned to Constantinople, but died in 1332.¹

Metochites was a fabulous patron of literature and the arts. He is mostly remembered today for his refounding of the monastery church of Chora; a highlight of any visit to the site today is his donor portrait. But he also endowed the monastery with a splendid library that was used by most of the intellectuals of that generation. In fact, some of the manuscripts that have been discussed in this volume passed through that library at one point or another.² One of its most prominent users, and a student of Metochites himself, was Nikephoros Gregoras (d. 1360), the historian, mathematician, and opponent of Hesychasm (a monastic theology that prevailed against much opposition in the mid fourteenth century to become the doctrine of the Orthodox Church). Metochites himself authored very many works, a corpus that has not been fully published in recent editions and

whose members are usually studied in isolation. It includes poems, some of them autobiographical; orations, including praises of Nikaia and Constantinople; letters; an account of an embassy to Serbia; and works on astronomy and physics.

The works that concern us here are what may fairly be called Metochites' "Essays," a collection of personal reflections on history, authorship, and various moral and aesthetic questions which, as a whole, are similar in tone and structure to early modern collections such as those of Montaigne and Bacon. Metochites made an early start in this direction around 1305 with a long piece *On Character or on Education*, which evaluated the benefits and challenges facing anyone who aspired to a proper education. Metochites continued to write smaller essays on these topics, often responding to critics of his style (which was very obscure) and his ideas (which were often original). In the 1320s these 120 pieces came together in a collection called Σημειώσεις γνωμικαί, which we may translate as *Short Notes on Moral Matters*, or *Moral Essays* (the modern title is the Latin *Miscellanea*).³ Only twenty-eight of them have been edited in the twentieth century; for the rest we have to rely on an inadequate nineteenth-century edition.⁴

These essays are indeed difficult to read at times – Metochites' critics had a fair point – and as a result this most interesting Byzantine intellectual has not received anywhere near as much attention as he deserves. Many of his thoughts are original, and this by itself confounds the field of Byzantine Studies that is largely premised on showing how texts run in the ruts of tradition, even if they tweak the details. Metochites was not only learned: he was able to reflect self-critically upon his own learnedness and situate it in a larger historical and even philosophical context that he himself also had to supply. To construct this new framework for his thought he pulled in material from ancient rhetorical theory, history, political theory, and philosophy. Thus, any number of his essays may be based at least in part on his readings of the ancient historians, and we cannot translate them all here. For the purposes of this volume, I have chosen three because they illustrate different aspects of the Byzantine engagement with the ancient historians.

The most interesting (from many points of view) is probably the first (no. 93): "A note on how we remember and have accounts of everything regarding the Greeks, both their great deeds and trivial matters." Metochites elaborates on an idea that he had already presented in his hortatory work *On Character*: the deeds of the Greeks were not in themselves all that great, but our perception of them is

biased because we (i.e., we Greek-speakers, including the Byzantines) tend to have Greek histories and not others. In *On Character*, Metochites finds that the deeds of the Romans were far more important historically than those of the Greeks, and so were the deeds of other nations, but they did not record them in the language of Herodotos, Thucydides, and Xenophon, and thus they have received less attention from learned posterity.⁵ Byzantine thinkers, therefore, live in a kind of historical “bubble” constructed by their learned literature, and at the end of the essay Metochites suggests that this is true of all peoples. And yet he does not seem to have ever made an effort to look outside that bubble.⁶ In short, this essay is a sharp critique of the epistemology of the Greek historiographical tradition, one of the first of its kind.

Essay 93 is important for one other reason as well. Metochites suggests that his own people, whom we otherwise know as Christian Romans (i.e., the Byzantines) were somehow descended in race from the ancient Greeks, and had inherited the same language from them. Like most Byzantines, Metochites does not explain exactly how they were both Greek and Roman, that is how those two identities coexisted, but his statement of descent was typical of the intellectual context of the years after the Latin invasion of the empire: *Hellenic* subjectivities were theorized by Byzantine intellectuals in response to the Latin claim that the Byzantines were not Romans but mere *Graeci*.⁷

The next of the translated essays (no. 113) is ostensibly entitled “On the Greeks, and how from the beginning they were distinguished not by the magnitude of their deeds or fortune but by their civilized nature and character, and the nobility of their thoughts.” The essay is not exactly about that, however. It does not explain what was so civilized and noble about the Greeks that made them distinguished – Metochites takes that for granted – nor does it try to prove that the deeds of the Greeks were actually minor compared to those of others. What the essay offers instead is a revision of Thucydides’ *Archaiologia* (ch. 1.2–22 of the *History of the Peloponnesian War*). Specifically, Metochites tries to imagine how the earliest Greeks came to be a naval and maritime power, whereas most great empires were land-based. We cannot account for the discrepancy between the title and the contents of this essay, but it nevertheless offers us a fascinating glimpse into how Metochites was spurred by Thucydides to reconstruct past developments that were not themselves documented but had to be inferred. As an extended thought-experiment of this kind, it is unique in Byzantine literature.

The third is *Essay* 116, “On the instability of fortune, based on specific examples.” It is a typical rumination on a topic that exercised the thoughts of many Byzantine moralists, but it is introduced with what purports to be a long paraphrase of a passage from a lost ancient historian, Theopompos of Chios. This illustrates one of the dangers of reconstructing fragments from Byzantine writers, as mentioned in the Introduction. The passage is not in fact from Theopompos the historian (fourth century BC) but from Theopompos the comic playwright.⁸ Metochites has copied, and elaborated upon, the paraphrase in Plutarch’s *Life of Lysandros* of a play by “Theopompos the comedian” mocking the Spartans (13.5), and mistook him for the historian (so, in a different sense, Metochites was using an ancient historian after all). Interestingly, the *Souda* distinguishes between the “Athenian comedian” and the “rhetor from Chios” who wrote the histories, and has a long entry on each.

ESSAY 93

A note on how we remember and have accounts of everything regarding the Greeks, both their great deeds and trivial matters

[591] We have devoted an extraordinary amount of attention and study to all that the Greeks did and everything said about them, both to things that were great and to those that were not, the latter perhaps deserving only passing comment. Everything about them has been stored up in memory by the historians, and there is almost nothing that has not, including their speeches and sayings and deeds, some involving foreign peoples and others only each other. Now, some of these are perhaps worthy of admiration and certainly merit being remembered, but others deserve to be forgotten once and for all, being the sorts of things that happen in life always and everywhere, both in the past and now, and have no greatness or novelty about them at all. At all times the earth is full of such things, among all nations and all manners of people, [592] even those of humble fortune and common way of life. But when it comes to the Greeks, everything that they did in ancient times has been dignified by the accounts of their historians, so that we remember what the Athenians, Lakedaimonians, and their allies did against the Medes by land and by sea. To be sure, those were superlative deeds and most worthy not only for the Greeks but any other people anywhere else. Thus they are justly ranked among the greatest deeds performed by anyone in the whole of time. They also record what these two cities, the

leaders among the Greeks, did to each other along with their respective allies, but then also what happened to the Seriphians collectively, and also perhaps to some of them on a private basis, or to the Melians, Siphnians, Sikyonians, or some other small towns in the Peloponnese, or elsewhere on the Greek mainland, or on some small islands in the Aegean.

Now, one might deem the Greeks most fortunate because their deeds had the special honor to be commemorated in the praiseworthy language of Herodotos, Thucydides, and Xenophon, which is so closely studied by scholars – or by other historians whose works may have a claim to learned attention. For just how many similar things have taken place among other nations from the beginning of time, things that are always still happening but are not commemorated anywhere? Or even greater and bigger deeds containing every manner of virtue, clever plans, timely speeches, and the character of men, all of them worthy of admiration? [593] We know nothing whatsoever about them, nor are we in a position to use them as examples in our orations and discussions, in contrast to the abundance and variety of Greek material that we have, which is due to their historians, whom we are especially required to study.

For my part, I am delighted and – how to put it? – downright amazed when I see often how some ancient writers and, no less, some of our own writers too study the books of those men who experienced momentous events and circumstances, converse with them, and use them for the purpose of composing and structuring their own orations by taking examples and parallels from the ancient feats and sayings of the Greeks. This is how they attempt to approach their themes and accomplish their goals. And it was many who made timely use of such exempla when addressing the Roman Caesars of old, the masters of virtually the entire earth and its seas, or, since then, when addressing some of our emperors, or illustrious leaders, or men of great fortune; namely, they would mention what some Athenian citizen, or a Lakedaimonian, Theban, Megarian, or even what an Eretrian or Aiginitan happened to do or say, when he met some other person of the same type.⁹ [594] And the audience does not find it beneath its dignity to hear this, nor the speakers to say it, nor do they refrain or are turned off by the sheer smallness of these people. How could we fail to notice or take it in a good spirit when we consider that, whenever an orator is eager to praise or exhort to noble action an Augustus or a Trajan among the Caesars, or, among our own, a Constantine the Great or Theodosios,¹⁰ or any others who are among the greatest and most illustrious men – equivalent to those whom I just

mentioned even if slightly inferior, at any rate close to them in nature if not in fortune – that the orator, then, every time he structures his speech around exempla, remembers to cite what some or other Athenian did or said that one time, whether he was among the most powerful and proud, such as a Perikles, Themistokles, Iphikrates, or Konon, or anyone else for that matter; or at Sparta, an Agesilaos, Kallikratidas, Brasidas, and Lysandros; at Thebes an Epameinondas and Pelopidas; and later, in the towns of the Achaian League, a Philopoimen and Aratos. But it might also be someone from those same Greek cities who is deemed wretched, whatever it was that he said or did that caused him to be condemned, such as a Demades,¹¹ Kleon, Hyperbolos,¹² Anytos, Meletos, Lykon,¹³ [595] Aristogeiton,¹⁴ Phoibidas,¹⁵ and Sphodrias,¹⁶ or anyone else from that “bad” group. Every habit, deed, and saying of all these men has been passed down to posterity for ever, and to us, by the wonderful language of the historians, who have been so celebrated. And yet how many similar things have happened among other nations, and how many men have lived through even greater events, whether they fared well or not in them? People are always living through such events but are deemed worthy neither of mention nor commemoration, not even among those closest to them in time, space, and residence, far less among those who live long after them.

I believe that the explanation for this may be the following, namely that when we have Greeks speaking about Greeks, it is entirely plausible that they would remember their own affairs and history, write it down, honor it, deem it worthy of commemoration, and transmit it through time down to us, who are of the same race and who share and have inherited their language. Perhaps, then, a similar thing has happened among other nations as happened with us, namely that they have honored in their own writings and memory the speeches and affairs of their own predecessors and ancestors, transmitting them to their own posterity in a format which they can readily use. [596] So that just as we are ignorant about them because the Greek historians neglected to write about them, so too perhaps our affairs are quite unknown to them because their historians did not bother to investigate anything about us.¹⁷

ESSAY 113

On the Greeks, and how from the beginning they were distinguished not by the magnitude of their deeds or fortune but by their civilized nature and

character, and the nobility of their thoughts

[757] It seems to me that the main characteristics of the [ancient] Greeks were the nobility of their character and their civilized nature, which were outstanding [758] from the beginning. It is for these qualities that they have acquired such a beautiful and splendid reputation among all people and throughout the world, as their fame spreads brilliantly everywhere. But when we look at the greatness of their deeds and the magnitude of their actual power, they do not differ much from those of many other people who have held other parts of the inhabited world; however, hardly anyone spoke about those people and their deeds were not recorded. One reason – in addition to others – that might explain this nobility and natural aptitude is the fact that the Greeks live in the middle of the inhabited world, whether we take our bearings between east and west or north and south. It is not an absurd suggestion to make that their location is marked by the best harmony of elements of existence and seasons, which are configured in the best possible way for those who live there. They are free of extreme conditions in all aspects, [which is important because such conditions] compel those who live there to be affected by, and to have to adjust to, the extremes of each type of local condition. Yet such excesses are not conducive to, or in harmony with, a good life. We learn what the opposite of each extreme is from the necessities of life, nature, and experience, and if anybody has one particular quality in abundance, he is necessarily far removed from the opposite quality. [759] And in this case, it will not be possible for him to acquire the nobility and grace that belongs to the quality he does not possess, if indeed such an advantage belongs to that quality; instead, he will have to yield to necessity, weighed down with more than enough in one aspect but lacking in the reasonable amount of its opposite, having only a little of it; so that in one respect he will have more than enough while in another he will have less than it, thereby making him uneven and especially ill-configured, and he will be put together without rhythm or rational proportion.

But when we look at the Greeks, as I said, the suitability of their location on the earth and their middle-point away from all excesses brought about for them a concentration at one point of all forms of nobility, so that it not possible to see in them “anything in excess,” as the ancient saying goes. While an excessive quality may ensure our superiority in one respect, it destroys all other qualities as it is not in excess in accordance with rational proportion. Thus, the Greeks are manlier than some other people, more courageous and strong, but compared to

others they fall short in those qualities. In other words, they do not share the soft and effeminate nature of the former group or the savage nature of the latter, which makes them unsuitable for anything cultured or a refined upbringing. So too, they are wiser and mentally sharper than some people, and especially devious in their enterprises compared to them, but even in this respect they take second place to some others and even seem to be like infants in need of tutors before they can become perfect, which is what I think that ancient Egyptian saying about them means.¹⁸ The Greeks are always like children, I think, when compared [760] to the Egyptians or I know not who else. We can also say that the Greeks are more stubborn and proud, freedom-loving, and unwilling to be humbled than some people, but moderately less so than others. The same can be said about every character trait and every natural manner that stems from any part of the soul, both the logical and the dyad of non-rational traits, namely desire and spirit (to distinguish them by form).¹⁹ Moreover, the Greeks hold a middle position even when it comes to all bodily dispositions as well, so that they are not, as I said, in any way constituted intemperately. That, then, is how this matter holds, and I have set forth my explanation for it.

I turn now to the second of the propositions I stated above, namely that the world has witnessed no truly great or outstanding accomplishment that ever came from them and was distinguished by overwhelming strength and power of command. Nothing that they did deviated from the human norm in triumphal majesty, conspicuousness, and overabundance of glory. The cause of this, I believe, is that in those ancient times the Greeks dwelled separately, each in their own part of the world, divided among their different states and living according to different customs. None of them ever managed to consolidate their power and authority. That is why their deeds and fortune were always humble, as they governed only their own realms well and never thought of going beyond that or extending themselves. Rather, they had this one goal – and acquitted themselves well in it – namely not [761] to suffer or incur danger at the hands of those nations that wielded global empire at any time, and to preserve themselves free from domination; they zealously guarded the freedom that they inherited and passed down for a long stretch of time.

Moreover, almost all of the Greeks lived next to the sea and could flee or withdraw from the suspect designs of those who were more powerful at any time. They thought it better to trust more in the sea than the land. For in the most ancient times people did not casually embark upon the sea.²⁰ The most powerful

nations had an easier time of it on land, and they almost completely stayed away from adventures at sea. It was only in much later times that people made a great effort to master nautical matters and to wage war at sea, that is in naval battles. Therefore, the Greeks ventured toward the sea, for the reason that I gave above. Now some Greeks lived near the coast and they did not dare to abandon the coastline, enter the mainland, or abandon the turmoil and noises of the waves, since they did not know anything else and they did not see any ports in the mainland that would permit them to take advantage of the sea. Even if it was for only a few stades of distance, they did not abandon the coastline, but went on living near to the sea. So [to repeat], some Greeks lived near the coastal areas of [762] the mainland that were washed by the sea. But other Greeks occupied the parcels of land that are scattered throughout the sea [i.e., islands], and they made the sea inhabitable by human beings, taming the islands in its midst that were previously uninhabited; by crossing it they showed themselves to be serviceable to mankind. It was the Greeks themselves who settled almost all the islands and prepared them to receive human habitation, arranged them well, and founded political societies on them – not only Crete, Lesbos, Euboia, Rhodes, Samos, Chios, and many other islands that are by Greece and in the Aegean, both the small and the large ones, but some other ones too that are farther away and much bigger than the rest. For Sicily and Cyprus were Greek lands too and hosted many Greek cities. All other nations settled on them on Greek terms. No barbarian had set foot on these islands in former times, though later some did become powerful and tyrannical and took hold of lands there by force, settling in groups against some of the Greeks.²¹ But in the beginning none of these islands fed any population other than the Greeks, and they were Greek property. So if we can say that the Greeks prevailed among all peoples in one thing, [763] it would be this, that in ancient times they made the entire sea their own possession. It was they who conducted their business on it; only a few others set sail on it, and they only for business,²² whereas the Greeks dominated it in all ways.

And just as any other people had its own piece of land, thus did the entire sea in those years spread out before the Greeks. They alone among all people were able to sail on it effectively and, no matter what happened, they did what they wanted upon it. They did everything on it and they built dwellings on even the small islands, and also Greek cities, many of which were close to each other, indeed neighboring, just as on the mainland their agricultural settlements were also joined in conurbations. All these islands had *great* cities too, not just *many*

of them, because this was the custom of the Greeks from the beginning. For at that time they were accustomed to living in separate groups, each governed by his own laws, as they preferred to live in many smaller settlements than as one people in one unit. Indeed, in both ancient times and now when any nations or regions of the earth choose to live in loosely affiliated republics and eschew the rule of one master, one can infer and actually see that they tend to have more dense urban networks than the rest. And it is for this reason, as I said, that all the seas in the entire earth were settled in former times by the Greeks, and that is also why [764] such a few small and otherwise insignificant islands contain huge cities that are disproportionate to them, and why they are so close to each other, forming almost a continuous line.

Dominion over the sea at those times belonged to the Greeks, as I said, and they were the first to implement nautical practices and develop them the most. They devised ways of waging war in ships, putting quite a lot of thought into it. As Thucydides himself says,²³ at first they organized their naval power in a naive and primitive way, far less sophisticated compared to what prevailed in later times due to their shrewd contrivances in the matters we have been discussing. The Greeks paved the path that led from less perfect to better and more perfect practices, as indeed nature has done throughout history and always will do. At any rate, in this case it was the Greeks who made the effort to develop the ability to sail across the sea in ships and to profit greatly by doing so, and they eagerly implemented what they devised.

According to history, it was the Cretans who developed a real sea power, first among all the Greeks, and who contended against all others who were upon it. I believe it was this that gave rise to the proverb, “the Cretan and the sea,”²⁴ not for those who are pretending [to not know] but rather for all who mock others,²⁵ referring to things that are their own, exclusive property. And Minos [765] is celebrated in songs and mentioned in more reliable histories as the most ancient among the Greeks who nobly established civil laws on Crete, he before any other Greek, even though he governed the affairs of the island as a monarch and his power over the sea was without peer. It was from there, and in succession to him, that the Cretans were destined to rule at sea, subjecting almost all the islands of Greece to themselves, as they were stronger than the others, more technically proficient in naval battles than were hoplites, and they had more ships. The cause for this was especially their military training, political practice, and the laws of Minos, which were in other respects orderly and moderate, but were especially

advantageous when it came to increasing and administrating their lands and the affairs of their people in the best way. Those laws were also quite effective at arming and preparing for war those who lived according to them, because they devoted much attention to the cultivation of martial qualities. That is why, in later times, Lykourgos and the Spartans likewise made a point of using the same laws.

More than anyone else, the Cretans are supposed to have given models of authority, ductile politics, and motivated incentives to all the other Greeks from the beginning, with which they could manage their affairs in a more vigorous way. And they first, more than any of the other Greeks, prevailed over the seas, as I said. After them the Rhodians [766] were second, as they too in later times subjugated the islands around their own. The abundance of their wealth, arrays of ships and dockyards, and all the other adornment of their city distinguished them among the Greeks and made them renowned. Ultimately, after them it was the Athenians who prevailed at sea more even than the Rhodians. This was after the Persian Wars and the battle of Salamis. Seizing that opportunity to flourish and do well for themselves, that is insofar as a single city was able to, they grew powerful at sea. Dispatching large fleets far from home they brilliantly came into foreign lands: Egypt, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Pamphylia, and the Eurymedon saw them pass through and win victories, even when they were just sailing past, and they beat down the insolence and sea power of the Persians.

However, as was said above, while the Greeks were busy at sea from the beginning, they never had the upper hand on land, nor did they make an effort to extend their power far from the sea. The whole of Greek affairs was a small part of the fortune of the world and could be easily circumscribed and defined. Nothing that they did made much of an impact on the whole world, unless it be their civilized nature, mentality, and noble [767] character. In every other respect they were small, in that they each lived in a separate locale, just as chance would have it, and according to his own customs, and they were never governed in a consistent and coherent way. At first the cities had monarchies and tyrannies, but not horrific ones as they later became, and these were the regimes on each of the islands and in the cities on them, some relying on hereditary succession and others on whatever rulers time and circumstance tossed up. Ultimately, all of the Greeks finally changed their regimes and were governed by republics, but in different ways, so that some were more democratic and others more oligarchic. The exceptions at that time were certain sick cities that fell in between, fighting against themselves and eventually falling into purely tyrannical monarchies.

These served them poorly and, being unable to endure them in some way, they again restored their polities through the daring and high-mindedness of noble men. They thrust away tyrannical violence and, out of a love of freedom, came to a serviceable agreement among themselves.

The histories recount that, among all the other Greek cities, Athens and Corinth waged a truceless war against every form of tyrannical autocracy in the Greek cities, with particular [768] vigor. Thus the Athenians and the Corinthians helped all the other cities with every kind of aid and every army that they could muster against the Greek cities that were held down by tyrants. They restored their freedom by destroying the tyrants in them. It therefore seems to me that they especially labored all the time to preserve their own people [the Greeks] free of domination simply through their own good character and good will for their own kin. This was all the more so because they had first-hand experience of the degradation and misery that comes with being ruled by tyrants, the Athenians under the tyranny of the Peisistratids and the Corinthians under the Kypselids. More so than the other tyrannies, these were extended by hereditary succession. Thus these two cities were more inclined to sympathize with those who were suffering the same and so they waged a continual war without pause against all forms of tyrannical monarchy.

ESSAY 116

On the instability of fortune, based on specific examples

[792] The historian Theopompos, making fun of the Lakedaimonians, compared them to dishonest [793] inn-keepers who start off by giving their customers the sweet wine that is easy to drink, but do so speciously for the sake of money, as later they mix it up with the bad wine that has gone sour and serve that up. He would say that the Lakedaimonians handled the war against the Athenians in such a way, tempting the Greeks at first in their programmatic proclamations by offering them the sweet draught of freedom from Athens, but later served them the bitter and most unbearable mixture of hardship and cruel treatment at their hands. They subjected the cities to the harsh tyranny of decarchs and harmosts²⁶ and dealt with them in a way that was exceedingly difficult to bear and hard to endure or pay back.²⁷

What Theopompos mocked the Lakedaimonians for in this comparison seems to me quite fitting to say even more about the fortune of human affairs in

general. On each occasion it first extends the sweetest euphoria to many people, showing its pleasant face but deceiving those to whom it comes by giving them a taste of most pleasant draughts and conditions and filling them up with many hopes about the future. And once it has, through this breezy lightness, lifted up those who [794] are gaping at her in eager expectation, it then unexpectedly brings down a great weight upon them and introduces altogether troublesome and most grievous cares into their lives. Sometimes she takes those who had suddenly formed great expectations based on her promises and abandons them quickly right when they are facing difficulty, as if she were a treacherous fellow-traveler plotting harm against her companions in precisely those times and places when one has the most need of alliances and associations that lend the maximum amount of strength and support, but she abandons them to their fate and swiftly gives them the slip, even secretly. All this takes place contrary to all the expectations formed by those whose hopes had previously been lifted, who thought that her companionship would help them along the life-path that they seemed to have taken. It is in this way that most people experience fortune, who is entirely untrustworthy: at first they get their hopes up and even become conceited because of the favorable winds that she sends their way, and they expect the good times to last through it all until the end, just as in the beginning, when they tasted the sweetness. But no sooner have they experienced all that when horrible things start happening to them and do not stop. Then they deem life a thing to be avoided and they long, in every possible way, to improve their lot, but they fail to accomplish this in any respect. In their life they now have to endure grievous suffering and the oppression of evil circumstances; they have no means by which to run away in search of freedom or better treatment, or [795] by which to propitiate fortune.

This is the shameless way of a whore who does not ever fully turn back to her previous attachments, but is always exchanging one for the other, quickly going the rounds. She proves that those men are indeed worthless and stupid enough to ever associate with her and do not understand what they see: that is they fail to imagine that they themselves might suffer what they clearly see happening to others. Nor do they notice her betrayals and lack of affection, her swirling and oscillating manners and deceits and her deceptive charms: they do not harmonize well with our lives and the human constitution, just as if – to take a metaphor from musical theory – she were switching from the Lydian mode to the Doric one on a stringed instrument, and then back again to the other. At one time she is plucking the strings, at another she is letting them go, extending the promise of a

kindly disposition and easy times.

Indeed, whoever manages to see through these complicated and easily changed chords and songs that fortune sings, and runs away from her, seeking his true home, that fatherland and way of life that is set on high and does not change, that would be a much more prudent man. He would be resourceful and wise as Odysseus was in the poem when he sailed past the Sirens. He handled that well through his crafty device: he blocked out their song which seemed melodious on the outside [796] but lured men in by knocking on the doors of the senses. Under its influence, we might think that these things are our necessary companions: but if we do not take the necessary precautions, yielding to their false temptations we may come to a bad end. However, even if this is so, and we are stating it correctly, it is actually very difficult to do, for it is a rare man who can see past the deceitful but sweet songs and delights that come from fortune, whether he does so from the start, or in the middle of the course, and does not ever again turn back to them until the end. They are like the “lofty words” of a hateful netherworld,²⁸ which are never easy to digest and can be useful only to those who are noble already by nature; they do not stand on their own or have force by themselves. And that man is truly blessed and worthy of admiration who manages to run past all that and avoid it based on the wise instructions of one who said that it must be avoided.

NOTES

- 1 For the life and works of Metochites, see Beck, *Theodoros Metochites*; Ševčenko, *Études*; de Vries-van der Velden, *Théodore Métochite*; and Bydén, *Theodore Metochites*.
- 2 Bianconi, ‘La biblioteca di Cora.’
- 3 For an introduction, see Featherstone, ‘Theodore Metochites.’
- 4 See the bibliography under Metochites (*Essays* 1–16 and 71 are in Hult, *Theodore Metochites*; *Essays* 8 and 93 are in Agapitos, Hult, and Smith, *Theodoros Metochites*). I thank Ioannis Polemis for critical assistance in translating the essays below.
- 5 This view of the relative merits of the Greeks and Romans would be independently stated by certain Renaissance theorists, especially Machiavelli.
- 6 For this problem in general, see Kaldellis, *Ethnography*.
- 7 Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, ch. 6; for aspects of Metochites’ Hellenism, see Garzya, ‘Byzantium.’
- 8 For the historian, see Flower, *Theopompus*. Jacoby recognized the error and excluded the Metochites passage from his edition of the fragments of Theopompus (with commentary): *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, v. 2B, 526–617.
- 9 This clause is unclear.
- 10 Metochites probably has in mind the works praising Trajan by Dio Chrysostomos, Constantine by Eusebios, and Theodosios by Themistios.
- 11 An Athenian politician who supported Philip and opposed Demosthenes, and was presented as

unscrupulous.

- 12 An Athenian politician of the end of the fifth century who is presented negatively in the sources and was ostracized.
- 13 The three accusers of Sokrates.
- 14 An Athenian politician who opposed Demosthenes who was imprisoned as a state debtor and was remembered as a demagogue.
- 15 A Spartan general of the period of the Spartan Hegemony who seized control of Thebes.
- 16 A Spartan general of the period of the Spartan Hegemony who died in the battle of Leuktra (371 BC).
- 17 See the introduction of this chapter for the novel claims made in the conclusion of this essay.
- 18 Plato, *Timaios* 22b.
- 19 Metochites is here following Sokrates' tripartition of the soul in Plato's *Republic* into logic, desire, and the spirited part.
- 20 Metochites here embarks on his own version of Thucydides' *Archaiologia*.
- 21 E.g., the Carthaginians in Sicily. This is all far from the truth.
- 22 E.g., the Phoenicians. Metochites' account is fatally Hellenocentric.
- 23 Referring to the opening chapters of Thucydides' *Archaiologia*.
- 24 Meaning someone who knows but is pretending not to know.
- 25 Polemis proposes emending ἀπάντων to ἅ πάντων.
- 26 The names of Spartan officials.
- 27 For Metochites' confusion about the Theopompos he was citing, see the introduction to this chapter.
- 28 Literally, the Styx; Metochites' source is Homer, *Iliad* 8.369.

IOANNES KANABOUTZES' COMMENTARY ON THE
ROMAN ANTIQUITIES OF DIONYSIOS OF
HALIKARNASSOS

This chapter takes us to the fifteenth century and to a context that was in many ways already post-Byzantine, even though Constantinople had likely not fallen when this text was composed. All the other readings of ancient historiography included in this volume were produced in Constantinople under the rule of the Roman emperors of what we call Byzantium. The present text takes us to the empire's former provinces, specifically to a principality in the northern Aegean founded by the Genoese family of Gattilusi. In the long aftermath of the Fourth Crusade (1204), many western powers had carved out territories for themselves which they ruled independently or, like the Gattilusi, in nominal subordination to the emperor in Constantinople. But after 1300, the Ottoman Turks began to consolidate their rule over Asia Minor, crossed over into Europe, and, by 1440, had subjugated most Balkan states along with many Latin principalities and the remaining lands of Byzantium. This world was politically complex and in rapid transition. This was reflected in the ideological conundrums and the historical preoccupations of its intellectuals.

Our author, Ioannes Kanaboutzes, exemplifies the negotiations of identity and culture taking place in the fifteenth-century Aegean. This context explains why he chose to comment on Dionysios of Halikarnassos in the first place. He himself seems to have been a Greek-speaking Orthodox subject of the Gattilusi (see below), though he also knew Italian and was pro-Union (that is, with the Catholic Church). As he was not a member of the Byzantine polity as such, his ethno-political identity in general, and his identity as a Byzantine in particular, were ambiguous. Under their own rule, the people we call Byzantines were, in their

own eyes, *Romans*: Greek-speaking and Orthodox to be sure, but Romans nonetheless. For them there was nothing counterintuitive about this, though it stands in striking contrast to the incomprehension and befuddlement that a thousand years of prejudice and polemic has instilled in most western scholars of Byzantium, who refuse to see the Byzantines as Romans. This stems from the deeper background and political structures that defined Kanaboutzes' own life. Medieval western powers refused to accept the Byzantines as Greek-speaking Romans and cast them instead as Greek-speaking Greeks. Imagining themselves as the true heirs of ancient Rome, the Latins could cast their relationship with the colonized "Greek" world in classical terms, as "Romans" ruling over "Greeks," which was only natural. This is the dynamic that explains Kanaboutzes' choice of Dionysios, who had argued for the cultural identity and common genealogy of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The following commentary on the passages of Dionysios' *Roman Antiquities* that argued this point was thus a perfect way for Kanaboutzes to ameliorate contemporary dynamics in ancient terms. He too was looking for ways to reconcile ideologically modern "Romans" and "Greeks," and his commentary is an exercise in this direction.

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF IOANNES KANABOUTZES

Most of our information about the life and work of Ioannes Kanaboutzes comes from his *Commentary* on Dionysios, which is the work translated in this chapter.¹ This was addressed to a lord of Ainos and Samothrace who, as Kanaboutzes specifies in his preface, was the brother of the Genoese lord of Mytilene, Kanaboutzes' own lord. These can only have been the brothers Palamede Gattilusio (lord of Ainos, 1409–1455) and Dorino Gattilusio (lord of Lesbos and Old Phokaia, 1428–1455), two of the sons of Francesco II of Lesbos. Kanaboutzes cannot be referring to another brother of theirs, Jacopo of Lesbos (1404–1428), because during his lifetime the Gattilusi did not control Samothrace. Samothrace came into Palamede's possession in ca. 1431. Thus, the work was composed between 1431 and 1455,² and probably before the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453. Kanaboutzes was writing in a period when the Turks were quickly conquering the formerly Byzantine lands of the Balkans and Asia Minor, but many Latin colonial regimes and principalities still dotted the Aegean littoral. The Genoese Gattilusi ruled a number of these smaller holdings, whose populations were chiefly Greek-speaking and Orthodox,

i.e., former Byzantines.

It is important to reconstruct the circumstances and history of the text's composition, which seem not to have been understood clearly by scholars so far. This history can be reconstructed from the preface and second preface (between sections 16 and 17). Kanaboutzes, a *magister* in the service of Dorino, was approached by a certain physician "Zoanes" (i.e., Ioannes, Giovanni), a *magister* in the service of Palamede (he refers to him as a "brother," but this need not imply a biological relationship, and probably refers instead to their common rank). Zoanes visited Kanaboutzes (it is not at first clear where) and they began to discuss the history of Dionysios of Halikarnassos (it is not clear why). Zoanes asked if Dionysios mentions Mytilene and Kanaboutzes replied that he mentions only Samothrace. Zoanes then commissioned from him a selection of those passages that relate to Samothrace, to be presented to Palamede when he next visited Mytilene. This suggests that they were having this discussion in Mytilene. But the selection in question is not the work that is translated here. Kanaboutzes refers to it again in the "second preface." He says there that he did the following:

First, I placed at the top the original words of Dionysios himself and beneath them my exegesis, which was terse, limited, and as concise as I could make it. I take on the voice and the persona of Dionysios and say those things down below which he says above.

(Second preface)

Clearly, this is not the work that we have. That selection so pleased Palamede that he indicated that he would not object to an expansive treatment of the same theme, which is the work that we have here.

What else do we know about Kanaboutzes? In one of his letters dated 24 April, 1444, Kyriacus of Ancona mentions a *Crytes* (i.e., *krites*) *Canabuzios* and a *magister Canabuzios* of Phokaia. The index of the I Tatti edition of Kyriacus' *Later Travels* assumes that they are the same man. But the first one seems to be in the vicinity of the recipient of the letter, Andreolo Giustiniani, who was on Chios. Kyriacus instructs Andreolo to have the *krites* Canabuzios "or some other learned Greek" translate the text of an inscription that he sends him. The *magister* from Phokaia, on the other hand, had accompanied Kyriacus on a visit to Sardeis that he is recounting to Andreolo in the letter. The way he introduces this *magister* after having just mentioned the *krites* suggests that they were different men, and that the second one is likely to be our author.³ Kyriacus was

writing the letter from Phokaia (within the dominion of Dorino Gattilusio), so it seems that the *magister* was residing there and had accompanied him on the excursion to the ruins of Sardeis. The one thing that Kyriacus says about the *magister* is that he pointed out the gold-dust that could be found in the river bed. His interest in antiquities, topography, and specifically gold match those of our author.⁴

The family name Kanaboutzes is attested on Mytilene, Ainos, Chios, and Phokaia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and on Chios especially in the sixteenth, so there is no difficulty in postulating two men.⁵ Our Kanaboutzes may also be the recipient of a letter by Ioannes Eugenikos, delivered by the hand of Antonio Malaspina.⁶ The letter is not dated and conveys no useful information, other than the connection among the three men. Ioannes Eugenikos was the brother of Markos Eugenikos and like him an opponent of Union. He was at the Council of Ferrara-Florence and then at Mistra; he died after 1454. As we will see, however, our author was a Unionist.

One other work is ascribed to our Kanaboutzes, a table of the lengths of the day during the year, calculated for the latitude of Phokaia (this appears to be unpublished).⁷ Two manuscripts have been postulated as having been owned by him, but probably wrongly.⁸

THE COMMENTARY ON DIONYSIOS OF HALIKARNASSOS AND ITS POLITICAL PURPOSE

Kanaboutzes' brief treatise is not, of course, a full commentary on Dionysios, but his use of the term *exegesis* in the second preface legitimates the term. He did see what he was writing as a commentary: he expands and elaborates upon brief statements made by his author; supplies additional information and context; and relates what Dionysios says to contemporary concerns and views of history that Dionysios could not have known. As we saw, the exercise began in a selection of passages where Dionysios mentions Samothrace. But the opportunity provided by Palamede's second commission enabled Kanaboutzes to greatly expand his scope. He begins by arguing that rulers need to philosophize; that all practical and useful skills were invented by philosophers, even if the laymen who practice them do not know it; and that all things made by God have a useful side (1–16). He then discusses the reasons why Dionysios wrote history, greatly elaborating

on what Dionysios says in his preface, and lays out his thesis that the Romans were Greeks by origin (17–29). This section includes a strong affirmation of the Church of Rome as the heart of Christendom (25–27). The next section recounts successive early Greek waves of settlement of Rome (30–39), and includes a digression on the Capitoline hill (37–39). The next section revolves around the descendants of Atlas, including the Pleiades (43–45) and Dardanos (46–69), who moved from Arkadia to Samothrace and then Troy. This section contains many digressions on the divisions of the earth (48), Thrace (49), nymphs and nereids (51–52), Caesar Augustus in Athens (53), the myth of the Hellespont (56), Phrygia (58), what the Turks call Ida (60), and the genealogy and functions of the Greek gods, especially Hestia-Vesta (61–67). The final section of the treatise concerns the Trojan War, Aeneas, and Romulus and Remus, though the protagonists are the palladia and other cult images that moved from Arkadia to Rome via Samothrace and Troy (70–96).

Therefore, Kanaboutzes “comments” on only a few passages in Dionysios. He rewrites and rephrases what Dionysios says, draws out its implications, and sometimes elaborates the point to excess, often pausing to relate it back to an overarching thesis (usually that Rome was settled by Greeks). In addition to Dionysios, he draws on the tradition of scholia and commentaries to flesh out mythological narratives and genealogies. He also likes making correspondences between ancient and modern names, places, customs, and beliefs, citing relevant contemporary vernacular terms (in modern Greek, Latin-Italian, Latinized Greek, and Turkish), which are of interest to linguists.⁹ Whether Kanaboutzes himself was writing in demotic Greek as such is a matter of definition.¹⁰ He avoids some of its grammatical markers but as a writer he basically transposes spoken Greek into an only slightly higher register and he uses phrases and idioms of modern Greek throughout.

The most interesting question concerns his affiliations with Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Hellenic paganism. It used to be believed (for example, by his editor Lehnerdt) that he was simply a Catholic of Italian descent, associated with the Genoese in the Aegean. But whatever the origin of his name (possibly from Greek-speaking south Italy), the profile of this “family” in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is Greek and Orthodox. We saw, for example, how Kyriacus ranked the *krites Canabuzios* on Chios among “the learned Greeks.” There is one passage where our author reveals his Orthodox background, namely where he lists peoples whom “we” call barbarians even though they are Christians (he does

this in order to show that “barbarism” is not a function of religion but of race): he lists Bulgarians, Vlachs, Albanians, Russians, all Orthodox (41).¹¹ Here he is basically explaining the Byzantine usage of “barbarian.”

At the same time, our author acknowledges the Church of Rome as the center of the Christian world and Rome as the original recipient of God’s Word (25–27). This would make him an Orthodox who accepted Union on the terms of the papacy. Some learned Byzantines had already converted to Catholicism (for example, Demetrios Kydones and Manuel Chrysoloras),¹² and support for Union would have been stronger among Greeks serving Latin lords in the Aegean (as we see in the case of the historian Doukas, an exact contemporary also serving the Gattilusi). His project of commenting on Dionysios suddenly becomes much more interesting, and is not just an antiquarian enterprise. Writing in the first century BC, Dionysios had famously argued that the Romans were of Greek stock originally and that Latin was a form of Greek.¹³ This argument would take on a renewed importance in the world of Kanaboutzes, wherein “Greeks” were ruled by Latins who identified with Rome and, in their conquest of Byzantium, could see themselves as avenging the ancient Trojans.¹⁴ Contemporary relations were being worked out in the guise of antiquarian exercises. Kanaboutzes was reaffirming the “sibling” nature of the two cultures, Greek and Latin, by tracing them to a common origin. Byzantine intellectuals of the Palaiologan period had already found that a useful framework within which to discuss Byzantine–Latin relations, as we see in Georgios Akropolites and Demetrios Kydones (the former anti-Catholic and the latter an actual Catholic).¹⁵

In this respect, two aspects of Kanaboutzes’ thesis are worth highlighting. The first is that instead of calling Romans by their conventional name in Greek (*Romaioi*) he transliterates the Latin: *Romanoi*. This may have been an attempt to preserve Byzantine Roman identity as he knew it, which westerners aggressively denied (labeling the Byzantines “Greeks”). At the same time, it enabled him to acknowledge western claims: we can both be Romans, he is saying, i.e., (Greek-speaking) *Romaioi* and (Latin-speaking) *Romanoi*. There are only two places where he uses the former spelling. The first is a hortatory passage that may actually be pointing to the current predicament of the Byzantine empire (28), his own *Romaioi*, whose emperor was still nominally the overlord of his Gattilusi lords. The second is section 38, where he quotes the response of the seer to an inquiry by king Tarquinius. This may be a slip caused by a close paraphrase of Dionysios (who, of course, has only *Romaioi* throughout). These neologisms were

meant to preserve the sense (that we have largely lost today) that the Byzantines and the Latins both had a claim to the Roman legacy.¹⁶

The second curious aspect of Kanaboutzes' "affiliation" argument is his use of pagan cult to establish a bridge between Greeks and Romans, specifically between Arkadia in the Peloponnese (which, he notes, is called the Morea today), the region of the northeast Aegean (including Samothrace and Troy), and finally Rome. The second half of his work focuses on the holy palladia given by Athena to the wife of Dardanos and their journeys to Samothrace, Troy, and Rome. It is interesting that an Orthodox scholar in favor of Union with Rome would offer an argument in favor of the affinity of ancient Greece with Rome based primarily on obsolete pagan cults.

THE "PAGANISM" OF KANABOUTZES

Kanaboutzes focuses his argument to an extraordinary degree on the *translatio* of the palladia from Greece to Rome via Troy. He is far more interested in this side of the story than Dionysios himself was. That story, of course, did not end there. Kanaboutzes surely knew the Byzantine legend according to which Constantine brought the palladium of Athena from Rome to Constantinople.¹⁷ Kanaboutzes is interested in ancient mythology and cult, and this in itself was not unusual for a Byzantine scholar, especially one instructing a Latin lord in local antiquities. He does go out of his way to denounce the gods as false and non-existent (24, 50–51, 90). But perhaps he protests too much, and a deeper engagement with the occult and "paganism" seems to lurk beneath the surface. There are no smoking guns here, only an interesting preoccupation.

The *Commentary* begins with an encomium of ancient philosophy that is disguised as a royal panegyric. Palamede might infer from the way it begins that he is going to be praised as a philosopher-king but in reality it is philosophy itself that is praised, especially an ancient, perennial version of philosophy that gave humanity fundamental arts and crafts. Kanaboutzes concludes with a strong endorsement of alchemy (13). He praises two rulers for their wisdom, Kleopatra and "our" Justinian – the former at far greater length (14). He is also well versed in astronomical science (the compass and the north star: 9, 11–12); he wrote a treatise on the length of the day at Phokaia, which implies mathematical attainment; and he is comfortable associating the stars with mythology in the case of the Pleiades (44–45) and the baneful star of Mars (83). It was not at all

unusual for Byzantines of this period to believe in the power of the stars. Kanaboutzes can allegorize the gods to make them seem less “non-existent”: Athena is intelligence (82–83) and Ares war and battle (83).

A more interesting connection remains to be made. At the end of one of the autograph manuscripts of the pagan philosopher of that age, the Platonist Georgios Gemistos Plethon at Mistra (d. ca. 1452), a second hand (i.e., not Plethon’s) copied from Kanaboutzes’ *Commentary* the list of Greek fleets that sailed to Italy in the heroic age (specifically, the titles of his sections 30–33). Diller suggested that the additions might have been made by Kanaboutzes himself between Plethon’s death in 1452 and 1468, when the codex is attested with Bessarion in Venice.¹⁸ However, it is too early to speculate along these lines, and Kanaboutzes might have visited Plethon before the philosopher’s death. It is still interesting that someone in Plethon’s close circle or the immediate transmission of his personal library had the *Commentary* and added some of its contents to the anthology produced by the Master. The codex in question, Marc. gr. 406, contains Plethon’s excerpts from historians, treatises on animals and plants, Platonic hymns, Zoroastrian doctrines, Leonardo Bruni’s *Constitution of the Florentines*, and other minor texts.¹⁹ At the least we can say that Kanaboutzes’ *Commentary* had quickly become part of the intellectual conversation.

TRANSLATION OF THE COMMENTARY

[1] IOANNES KANABOUTZES, *MAGISTROS*, TO THE LORD OF AINOS AND SAMOTHRACE

To my most elevated and magnificent lord of Ainos and Samothrace,

[PREFACE]

The source and subject-matter of this report which I, your servant, presume to address to your lordship, my most elevated and magnificent lord, is none other than the historian Dionysios of Halikarnassos. In his book of *Roman Antiquities*, where he recounts events from the beginning and foundation of Rome, he does mention, recall, and recount a few things about the island of your lordship, Samothrace, in order to prove and set forth how the Trojan race too, by which Rome was built and settled, was Greek and pure. Setting out from the Peloponnese, which is nowadays called the Morea, they inhabited Samothrace,

from where they crossed over and came to the east, to the region of the Troad, which they settled. Many days ago, the *magister* Zoanes,²⁰ a man excellent and good in all respects who is the physician of my most elevated lord, namely the brother of your lordship [2] and most splendid lord of Mytilene, came to our parts on account of some business that he had. As a wise and learned man, and a long-standing friend of mine, he asked me about the book of this Dionysios of Halikarnassos, which, as it happened, I had seen and read. Indeed, I showed him part of what Dionysios had written, as much as time permitted, and he received it favorably and praised it. Then he asked me whether Dionysios says anything about Mytilene. I replied to him that he makes no mention at all of Mytilene, Chios, or any other eastern city that was familiar to us, but about the island of Samothrace he does give an account and mentions it in two passages of the first book of his *Roman Antiquities*. He was greatly pleased to hear this and requested, with many assurances and appeals, that I write out, complete, and send to him everything that Dionysios writes about Samothrace when I learn that your lordship has come to Mytilene, so that he may show these things to your lordship. For he said that your lordship takes great pleasure in hearing the wise texts and the old histories of the ancients. This I did, as he bid me, and I found it to be as he said it would be. I draw this conclusion from the order which your lordship subsequently gave to my brother the *magistros*, that he relay it to me. Thus I, who was virtually in a state of necrosis, [3] despairing and unwilling to engage in such matters, am now rejuvenated, emboldened, and risen up from the neglect and laziness that previously held me fast.

1. WHAT PLATO SAYS ABOUT KINGS WHO PHILOSOPHIZE

I once saw a detailed²¹ argument made by the wise Plato that is fulfilled by your lordship. He said that the affairs of every city and every polity would be good and admirable whenever either the kings of those cities become philosophers or whenever men who are already philosophers reign in them.²² To philosophize is nothing other than to *philein*, that is to love, wisdom. For the love of wisdom is called “philosophy.” Now the ancients called kings not those kings who have been crowned, as we do – for that happened later – but rather they called “kings” the lords and rulers of each place, city, or land. It happens that Plato’s argument is correct, as the affairs of every land and city are in a good state precisely when the lord or ruler of the place is wise or loves wisdom and wise arguments, and this comes to pass from the following.

2. THAT KINGS ARE THE IMAGE OF GOD UPON THE EARTH

By nature, God is the only true ruler, king, and lord of the entire world. The images and likenesses of God upon the earth, that is the men who act in his place, are the kings, lords, and rulers of this world. Now, the best and most necessary aspect of an image is that it be in all respects and as much as possible similar and indistinguishable from that of which it is the image, namely [4] the prototype. God is wise, exceedingly wise, and through his wisdom he laid the foundations of the world, as Solomon says: “God laid the foundations of the world in his wisdom, he prepared the heavens in his mind.”²³ And David: “How vast are your works, Lord; you have done all in wisdom.”²⁴ So if God is wise, and kings and rulers are images of God, they ought to have wisdom too, which is a fragment of the wisdom of God that has come down to men so that they may be similar to God and hold their cities and subjects together, bind them, govern, and adorn them. In the same way, God maintains, contains, and administers all things through his wisdom and sagacity. It is to them that wisdom is a fitting attribute more than it is to laymen or those who have no power or position of authority among men. For a layman has nothing to adorn by his wisdom unless it be himself alone. But kings, lords, and every ruler can adorn through wisdom both themselves but also their cities and their subjects, each thing in accordance with its status and nature. The good order and forethought taken by the wise king and lord proceeds from the first and greatest things down to the last and least ones, to each according to its position. Wisdom and the love of wisdom are the possession and treasure that most fittingly belongs to rulers. As they are similar to God with respect to their authority, it follows that they must resemble God in their wisdom, so that [5] they may perfect themselves and become most similar to him insofar as this is possible for the nature of man.

3. WHAT ALEXANDER WROTE TO HIS TEACHER ARISTOTLE

Knowing these things, Alexander the Great, the Macedonian and son of Philip, wrote as follows to his teacher Aristotle.

Teacher, it was not right for you to write down in a book that great lesson concerning physical philosophy that is secret and not to be divulged, which the ancient philosophers transmitted in such a way that it not be written down but passed on from mouth to mouth among a few students in a select

line. For they considered wisely that if that lesson were written down every man who wanted to read it would become a philosopher readily and without study, toil, and the rest of diligence due to that subject-matter. Likewise, even random people, unsuitable and rough ones, would become philosophers and wise in the same way as honorable, privileged, and noble ones. Such a lesson in wisdom is suitable for exceptional, lofty, and elevated men, but not to the worthless, foolish, or wicked. I, Alexander, am a king and a king's son and I choose and want and desire that I be different from other people on account of the philosophy that I have learned rather than the kingship that I hold. I want a reputation among people both now and after my death for being a philosopher rather than a king. But you have made all people similar to me because you wrote and published this lesson. In what now will I differ from other people, [6] seeing as you have made wisdom a common thing among all people, which previously made me different and more distinguished than others?²⁵

That is what Alexander wrote to Aristotle, so greatly did he love wisdom and honor it. He governed his kingdom through it in such a way that he surpassed and far overshot all kings who reigned throughout all eternity, wiping out their names and fame. He accomplished such feats, overthrew such great kingdoms, and conquered so many nations within twelve years such as no other king did throughout all eternity, whether before or after him. He lived thirty-two years and eight months, but reigned only for the twelve years and eight months, whereupon he died, for he was a mortal man. Still, he lives on in this world through his deeds and words in the immortal life of glory. For as long as this world stands he will not cease to be praised, admired, and honored by men. I report these matters to your lordship so that you may be informed and confirmed in how wisdom and the love of wisdom are appropriate and suitable to all who have authority in the present world, whether that authority is small or great, because wisdom is the good order and shapeliness of authority and political regimes. All the good and noble things that exist in the world are the inventions of wisdom and were given to men, but are used by them without reason and without thinking and intelligence. Philosophy, as the ancients say, makes man similar to [7] God, as much as that is possible.

4. CONCERNING LYKOURGOS, AND WHAT THE IDOL OF APOLLO SAID TO HIM

Hence, when Lykourgos, the ancient lawgiver and philosopher, came to the temple of Apollo, the daemon that inhabited the idol of Apollo said to him: “O Lykourgos, for what reason did you come into my temple and lead me into great uncertainty? For I am uncertain and do not know whether you are a god or a man.”²⁶ This Lykourgos was an excellent philosopher and the first of the lawgivers among the Greeks. Truly, if one removes wisdom from this world along with the works and accomplishments of wisdom, he will find that people are and live just like the irrational and wild animals.

5. CONCERNING LAWS, THAT THEY ARE DEvised BY WISE MEN

The first and most necessary aspect of human polities are laws and good judgment, which tame people and prevent and hinder them from eating and devouring each other like wild beasts. But which unwise, uneducated, or layman created them? Rather, they come from philosophical men, those trained through wisdom. What layman ever established a law? What unwise or boorish man established a polity, which is the shapeliness and good order of humanity?

6. THAT MEDICINE WAS INVENTED BY PHILOSOPHY

Medicine is a salvific and benevolent art that fights a war against death and disease, but who invented and gave birth to it if not natural philosophy? As for the crass and vulgar arts and professions, from whom did they receive their basic principles, foundations, and constitution if not [8] from wise men and from philosophy itself?

7. CONCERNING THE ARTS COMMONLY CALLED FINE AND SCULPTURE

As for the men called builders, sculptors, and those in the fine arts, whence did they obtain the square, which they call “the knee” and by which they carve and balance out the stone into corners and various shapes, if not from geometry and the wise men who practice it? Whence did the builder obtain the plumb-line, which he calls “the little weight” and uses to make walls straight, if the philosophers did not show it to him?

8. CONCERNING BUILDERS, COMMONLY CALLED “PELICANS”²⁷

As for builders who make what are both commonly and in Latin called *boutzia*²⁸ (barrels), where did they learn to do this, when they want to make what they call a *fundus*?²⁹ With what in Latin is called a *sesta*³⁰ (or, commonly, a pair of compasses), they take the sixth part of the *boutzion* circle, which type of circle they call a “beading,” and with its sixth part they outline and make a *fundus* equal to and corresponding in all ways to the circumference of the *boutzion* or, as they call it, the “beading.” Where did they learn this if not from infallible and faultless geometry?

9. CONCERNING SAILORS AND THE STAR OF THE TRAMONTANE

What about sailors? Where did they learn about the Great Bear constellation, which is also known as the north pole and, in Latin, the tramontane, that its position is fixed as it does not move from its place, wherefore they use it as an immovable guide, a savior in the open sea where there are no harbors; where, then, if not from the experts in astronomy, that deals in matters above the clouds and gazes at the stars?

10. CONCERNING THE MAPPING OF COASTAL AREAS, PROMONTORIES, AND HARBORS

As for the mapping of coastal cities and places, [9] promontories, harbors, gulfs, and the like, which the Latins call “a sailing map,” where did this come from? What layman wrote this down, if not the ancient geographers and philosophers? As for the properties of the magnet, which the Latins call *pietra de calamita*, who taught humanity that it naturally attracts iron and draws it toward itself if not lofty philosophical reasoning?

11. CONCERNING THE MAGNET, AND HOW SAILORS USE IT TO MAKE THE SO-CALLED “COMPASS NEEDLE”

Moreover, from where did sailors learn – if in fact they have learned – that this rock, the magnet we just mentioned, has a certain friendship and repulsion to that tramontane star? They approximate the latter and hollow out the point of the tramontane in what they call their “iron needle” so that the iron can be affected by the power of the rock and point directly to the star loved by the rock,

I mean the tramontane star. In this way they avoid wandering about the points of the winds written on the lower part of the compass, and this compass is the foundation and basis of the nautical art.

12. THAT CRAFTSMEN PRODUCE THE GOODS THAT STEM FROM THE ARTS BUT DO NOT KNOW THE CAUSES AND FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE ARTS

Where do craftsmen have all this from if not from philosophy, which is the art of arts and the science of sciences? If someone should ask us, then, how is it clear that men have these things from philosophy, he will find that it is so from this proof. If he should ask builders, craftsmen in the fine arts, or sculptors who work with stone how it is the “knee” [10] makes equal angles or how the “little weight” makes walls straight, they will simply say that knees make equal angles and little weights likewise make walls straight: we look to them when we carve the stone and build walls, but what the cause is we do not know. Likewise, if one were to ask the craftsman who makes *boutzia* why it is that the sixth part that he takes with the *sesta* makes the *fundus* just right, neither too large or too small, he will answer: I know that it just happens, but how it happens I have neither learned nor know. In the same way if sailors are asked for what reason the tramontane star does not move or change its place, they will be silent for they have nothing to say. And if you ask them how the *pietra de calamita* attracts iron, they become as speechless as fish. If one probes them with deeper questions, such as what is the attraction and repulsion that the magnet rock has, as we said, with the tramontane, they will be petrified all the more. This happens because they have received these things from the philosophers in dark ignorance, lacking the scientific exactitude and knowledge that lies behind each one. The philosophers gave them the use of these things and their activity, so that they may benefit from them, but did not give the causes and the reasoning behind them. Nor were these things suitable for laymen, nor could their mind encompass them.

13. CONCERNING THE HOLY AND MYSTICAL ART OF CHEMISTRY, WHICH THE BARBARIANS CALL ALCHEMY³¹

As for the creative, mystical, and secret art of chemistry, whose product is it if not the lofty and theoretical philosophy that studies the nature of beings? I refer [11] to chemistry, which some of the Latins, following the barbarians, call

alchemy whereas they should say *arte chemia*, or the art of chemistry. It is called chemistry³² because it dissolves all metals and makes them like poured water but without all the fire and funnels. This art is practiced by very few nowadays because of the diminution of wisdom. It has the ability to change the properties of metals and their natures into whatever else it wants, turning mercury into silver and silver back into mercury, and makes bronze golden and so too silver. It paints rocks and crystals with all colors; it dissolves pearls and then again reconstitutes them. There is nothing in the property of a metal that this art is believed to be unable to switch and change into the nature of a different metal. Its chief and crowning achievement, which works the transmutation of metals and their effects, is called the philosopher's stone. The philosophers have given it this name to confuse the uneducated, who do not understand what the name means. The Latins have followed them and so they too call it *lapis philosophorum*.

14. CONCERNING KLEOPATRA, THE QUEEN OF EGYPT, AND KING JUSTINIAN

Many great and magnificent kings learned this mystical, holy, and secret art and were instructed in it by the philosophers, especially Kleopatra, the queen of Egypt, a woman who surpassed many men in the manliness of her soul, her suitability for the throne, and wisdom [12] and education; also Justinian the Great, who was one of our kings; and many others after him. These practices, others like them, and those that stem from them derive from the creative wisdom of God, as we said. If someone were to remove them from human life, that life would be fit only for animals, beastly and irrational, as was said above.³³ What has been said, then, is sufficient to establish – in fact, it is more than sufficient – that philosophy adorns human life, constitutes the vulgar arts, provides their foundation, discovers what exists beyond nature, and is itself more suitable and fitting for kings and those who rule over men and cities in any way than it is for generic laymen who rule over no one. We have been impelled by the momentum and logical sequence of the argument to become long-winded and speak at greater length than was proper given the subject-matter at hand, and I hope that your lordship, in your discernment, will rather approve than disapprove. For even if we have said much, we have said nothing bad but only what suffices to show, in brief, where wisdom and education is useful to human life and the rulers of this world. And if at the present time these arguments are not necessary or useful

to your lordship, still, it is likely that they will become useful in time either to your lordship or to someone else who is either now or will be associated with your lordship in the future.

15. NO FIELD OF STUDY IS USELESS

For there is not one thing that will not be found to be useful whether [13] in the right circumstance or to some person, which is clear from the following, namely that your lordship asked to hear about Samothrace. What possible expectation could Dionysios of Halikarnassos have had that, after he wrote this book that he wrote, your lordship, one thousand and five hundred years later, would seek to learn what he has to say about Samothrace in it? And yet it happened just so: what he wrote for some other reason is now, one thousand and five hundred years later, useful to your lordship so that you may learn something about the ancient history of this island.

16. THAT ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE ALL THINGS THAT GOD MADE ARE VERY GOOD, EVEN THOSE THAT SEEM TO BE BAD AND USELESS, SUCH AS SNAKES

This is so because of the decree of Scripture which says that God looked upon all that he had made and saw that it was good.³⁴ As for all the things in the world, if some thing exists, all things that exist are good. Some of them are always useful, good, and necessary, such as the light by which we see and the air we breathe; these things are always useful and good. Other things are good and useful either for specific circumstances or for some particular purpose or purposes, such as snakes. They are not always good, but they are good when doctors use them to devise antidotes against poisonous bites, to cure afflictions and illnesses through them, and also when they bid people to eat and chew them when they have great afflictions and illnesses that are difficult to cure. God's creations, including those that appear to be useless and bad, are in fact useful and good in the right circumstances and for specific purposes, and the effects of God's creations are necessarily [14] good, whether they have powers and properties such as herbs do, or provide services and labor for us such as horses, camels, and the like, or are arguments and deeds and fine qualities such as people have – not of course always and to everyone, but in the right time and for some people and specific needs, as we said above. Enough, then, has been said about this.

[SECOND PREFACE]

When your lordship commanded me, through my brother, that I write a commentary on the passages in Dionysios that are about Samothrace, I did so according to your command. First, I placed at the top the original words of Dionysios himself and beneath them my exegesis, which was terse, limited, and as concise as I could make it. I take on the voice and the persona of Dionysios and say those things down below which he says above. This thing that your lordship later commanded I had wanted to do ever since I sent the selections from Dionysios to the *magister* Zoanes. I did not hope that your lordship would think highly of it; rather, I thought that if someone were to be found who could relay to your lordship a small part of it, your lordship would be content with that. For this reason it did not at all seem to be a good idea to give to your lordship the heavy burden of a long-winded exegesis. But now that I know from experience that your lordship receives such things with attention and joy, I have done not only what you asked but took the histories, which [15] are presented in a condensed and brief way in the middle of his narrative along with place-names and other interesting and necessary things, especially those which this historian Dionysios writes in his preface and beginning of his book, and it seemed reasonable and incumbent on me to write them out at length here and send them under separate cover to your lordship; all the more so as there was need for your lordship to learn what the cause and reason was for which this man mentioned Samothrace, why he would recount it at all seeing as it is a rather small island, neither large nor especially fruitful nor having good land or sea. Let us, then, begin with the author himself – for this is necessary and reasonable – so may your lordship now learn about him first.

17. CONCERNING THE FATHERLAND OF DIONYSIOS, AND CONCERNING IONIA

This Dionysios who recounted the *Roman Antiquities* and is called the Halikarnassian hailed from Halikarnassos. That is why he is called the Halikarnassian. Halikarnassos was a city by the sea of Ionia. Ionia is the name of the entire region from the outlet of the Hermos river – that is, where it joins the sea (we call this the Tarchaneiotes river) – to a promontory that sailors in their barbarian speech call the Ram, but which should properly be called Knidos. On this promontory there was once a city that was also named Knidos after the name of the promontory, but now it appears to be in ruins. In the middle of this region

of Ionia is situated Halikarnassos, an abandoned and run-down [16] city these days at a place that the Turks call Menteshe, at a distance of one day's travel from the so-called Palatia.³⁵

18. WHEN DIONYSIOS WENT TO ROME AND WHAT HE DID WHILE THERE³⁶

Dionysios left Halikarnassos and went to Rome when the king in Rome was Caesar Augustus, in the days of whom was born the first and true king, Christ. He spent twenty-two years there. He there learned Latin and Latin literature and read all the historical books that the Romani and the other Latins had written about the foundation of Rome and all of its affairs. He likewise read the books in Greek written about Rome by various Greek historians. He acquired a precise knowledge of the affairs of Rome from both the Romani and the Greek historians, starting from its first origins until his own days, and he perceived truly that the Greeks falsely accused, slandered, brought charges against, and hated Rome and its kingship, its founders, and settlers in ways that were unjust, irrational, and altogether untruthful.

19. WHAT THE GREEKS SAID ABOUT ROME, ITS SETTLERS, AND ALL THE ROMANI³⁷

The Greeks of that time, and even more so those of the past, had looked upon the excessive prosperity of Rome and saw how one city, which began small, inglorious, and without distinction, reigned over the entire world. They grieved [17] excessively because of this and blasphemed against their gods just as today we find it hard to bear and groan and complain and, in our own way, blaspheme against God because this idiotic impious race of the Turks has prevailed over the entire world and eliminated us Christians. These Greeks said that their gods had unjustly and irrationally taken all good things and the command of the entire world which they should have given to the Greeks, who were pious toward the gods, noble in ancestry, wise in their knowledge, brave and manly on account of their training and experience, and had given them instead to these idiotic men who were unwise barbarian brutes, the Romani, who had neither good ancestry nor a fatherland, education, or any other distinguishing quality or human virtue.³⁸ They were nothing but bandits and evil-minded people, unknown to each other and few in number who had gathered together, each from a different

part of the earth, had formed an agreement, and caused much devastation in those regions of Italy. In the end, using the money from their plunder they built Rome too so that they could use it as their thieves' lair or, as common people call it, hide-out. Bit by bit they extended their rule to the races around Rome and all of Italy and even the Greeks themselves and the entire world. That is what the Greeks were saying and thinking.

20. THAT DIONYSIOS FOUND THE AFFAIRS OF THE ROMANI TO BE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THE GREEKS WERE SAYING³⁹

But Dionysios did not find matters to be as the Greeks were saying; rather, [18] they were entirely to the contrary. He immediately understood that the faulty notion that the Greeks had of the founders of Rome would not have emerged among the Greeks but for the fact that they had never read a universal and true history of Rome. They had not read the Romani and Latin chronographers on account of their language, and did not prefer the Greek historians of Rome who told the truth; but those historians who confirmed their prejudices, those they preferred. Among all the historians who wrote about Rome before Dionysios, both Romani and Greeks, some wrote true but only a little, but others wrote a lot albeit in a scattered and haphazard way, based on unconfirmed reports drawn solely from the testimony and witness of chance individuals.

21. FOR WHAT REASONS DIONYSIOS CAME TO WRITE A HISTORY OF ROME⁴⁰

For this reason and two more which we will relate in due course, Dionysios realized the necessity of writing this history, at length, in the proper order, with accuracy, veracity, and verification, with the intention of ridding the Greeks of the false notions that they held regarding the Romani. For he loved them as his own people and was ashamed to be a Greek and a pure one at that, seeing as the Greeks were people of such a kind and yet were ignorant of a thing so pure and incontrovertible, and professing and holding to beliefs about Rome, its founders, and settlers that were entirely contrary. For this [19] reason he wrote his history in Greek, so that all the Greeks might see it and learn the truth. This was the first reason why he wrote the history.

22. THAT DIONYSIOS WANTED TO SHOW THAT THE ROMANI WERE NOT BARRARIANS BUT A GREEK RACE

WERE NOT BARBARIANS BUT A GREEK RACE

He wanted to show through his history that the founders of Rome were not barbarians or uncouth people, as they were saying, but Greeks and a Greek race. Nor were they bandits and evil-minded people but pious toward the gods, useful to all people, and honorable people. Nor did they gather from various places, as if they did not have a fatherland and polity of their own, but they were men of note and renown who had a fatherland, ancestry, and polity. They did not build Rome to be a thieves' lair but made it a city of honor with a kingship and polity straight from the beginning.

23. THAT, AS DIONYSIOS SAYS, HIS GODS JUSTLY HONORED ROME ON ACCOUNT OF THE VIRTUE AND JUSTICE OF THE ROMANI

Likewise he wanted to show this too, that whatever the gods of himself and the Greeks did regarding Rome they did with good reason, justly, and just as they should have done it, because there were no people more pious toward the gods than the Romani, nor more just toward mankind, moderate in facing the passions, braver in war and death, or more prudent in the ordering, institution, and interests of their polity – and not only the ancient founders and settlers of Rome but the kings who came later and the highest magistrates, whom the Latins call consuls, and the councilmen, whom the Latins call [20] senators, and the entire populace of the city, which in Latin is called *populus*. Goodness and virtue came down through the single root of the ancient founders to all those who came later, including the kings, senators, and the entire populace of the city. Nor did the gods enhance and honor Rome and then leave it to govern itself by itself, but they always watched over it and guarded it visibly against every evil and danger that it encountered.

24. THAT DIONYSIOS WAS FERVENT IN HIS GREEK FAITH

That is what Dionysios' faith led him to understand, and he speaks accordingly. The man was more fervent in his Greek faith than any other man. About half his book of history is taken up with discussions of his gods, their temples, festivals, and honors. Now, I have no need to speak of these things which are false, unsubstantiated, and contain no truth in them, for they are deluded notions and altogether irrational. But because in his discussions about his gods he also talks about certain necessary matters and because without the former we would not be

able to discuss the latter, for this reason we will intertwine the discussion of his gods with the relevant narratives. I therefore take on his voice and say what he would say if he were alive, or rather what he actually says, through his writing, even though he is dead. He says, then, that his gods made Rome the queen and mistress of the entire world on account of the piety and virtue of its settlers, founders, the rest of its populace, its kings, and its senators.

25. HOW IT WAS NOT THE GODS OF DIONYSIOS AND THE GREEKS THAT HONORED AND ENHANCED ROME BUT THE GOD OF THREE HYPOSTASEIS, BECAUSE IT WOULD BE THE FIRST TO RECEIVE THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTIANITY THROUGH THE TEACHINGS OF PETER AND PAUL, AND IT WOULD BECOME THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

But I, of course, say that his gods neither exist nor have power. For Scripture says that the gods, who made neither the heaven nor the earth, have been destroyed. What happened to Rome was the providence of the first, only, and true God of the Holy Trinity. When the time was near and the days approaching when God had decreed for the Son of God, the Logos, to become an incarnate man, and when the faith of this great and ineffable mystery was about to put down roots, make a start, and lay its foundations in Rome through the teaching of the Apostles of Christ Peter and Paul: at that time Christ, for this reason, arranged before his incarnation that the city that was about to receive his faith and accept this mystery absolutely and in plenitude at the hands of his first and leading disciples should itself rule, conquer, and rule over the entire world and all civilized lands. He did this so that from it, as from a root or spring, it be transmitted and be preached and confirmed to all nations and the entire world, which is indeed what happened later. For the greatest and most elevated thing in the world had to take root and present itself in the greatest and most elevated city of the world. There is no greater or truer faith than that of the Christians, nor has greater power or empire ever existed in all eternity than that of Rome. That is why God made her [22] great and glorious, so that she could receive and confirm the great, rational, and supreme message and mystery of the Christians.

26. THAT BECAUSE OF THE MURDER OF CHRIST, GOD WAS ANGRY AT JERUSALEM AND SO IN ITS PLACE GOD RAISED UP ROME, THROUGH WHICH HE ELIMINATED AND DESTROYED IT,

THROUGH THE HANDS OF TITUS AND VESPASIAN, WHO WERE KINGS AND GENERALS OF ROME

Given that he was going to tear down Jerusalem as unworthy of this mystery on account of its murder of Christ, he enhanced and raised up the city that was to receive the mystery, and through this city that would receive and embrace the mystery he would destroy and eliminate the one that did not receive it but instead had become a Christ-killer and faithless. So Jerusalem was pulled down, destroyed, and captured by the Romani, just as Christ, who was himself the one who would do this, said: “not a stone will be left standing on stone that will not be torn down.”⁴¹ So that he who was going to destroy Jerusalem on account of its faithlessness raised up Rome because it was going to receive his mystery and was going to confirm and transmit it to the entire world, which happened later in the days of Constantine the Great. God’s custom, when he intends to do something, is to build it up many years in advance and lay the foundations and principles of the thing that he means to do, but to actually do it many years later, whatever he has decided to do. The following is proof of this, that Christ the great king was born in the days of Caesar Augustus, of whom there never was a greater king, [23] neither before him nor after him. The throne of Rome prevailed over all the other thrones of the world, and even at Rome, from the moment when it was built until this day, there has never been a greater king than this Caesar. This happened because of God and for the majesty of Christ the king who was born in the days of this worldly great king and on account of the majesty of his faith, which put down roots in the queen city of the entire civilized world, namely Rome.

27. THAT ROME UNTIL TODAY IS THE HEAD OF THE WORLD ON ACCOUNT OF THE CHURCH AND THE RANK OF THE POPE

To this day, Rome, even if it does not rule the world in secular terms, still reigns in spiritual terms over the entire world on account of its faith. The entire world knows that the Church of Rome rules and reigns over Christians everywhere in the world, and all the thrones of the earth obey and submit to her lest the original purpose of God fail; rather, they do so in order that she retain her honor, without cease and eternal, this city that received this mystery and the Incarnation. For this reason he consented that his first and leading Apostles, Peter and Paul, die at Rome. For if Jerusalem was not overlooked by the Lord on account of its murder

of Christ, both Peter and Paul would have died there, where their teacher and God had died. But this now did not happen on account of the rage that he had toward Jerusalem, so he set them down as foundations for the faith in place of himself in the city that he loved and honored, that it too be glorified through them and [24] so that they too be eternally glorified in it with all the proper honors. I believe this is the truest reason why God elevated Rome to such a pinnacle of authority and empire, not for the reason that Dionysios gives. At any rate, the first reason why Dionysios turned to history is as we said above, namely to prove that the race of the Romani was Greek and to remove the deluded notion and hostility that the Greeks had about the settlers of Rome, such as that they were foolish, evil-minded, and barbaric men; also that they stop blaspheming their gods by saying that they had unjustly and irrationally bestowed such power on Rome along with so many good things.

28. THE SECOND REASON WHY DIONYSIOS TURNED TO HISTORY⁴²

Dionysios says that the second reason why he turned to history was to properly relate and praise the knowledge, bravery, deeds, speeches, regimes, and accomplishments of those great men who were equal to the gods, and their great and noteworthy feats that were worth recounting. It was they who built, grew, honored, and led Rome to such pride and majesty. As he says, until his times there was no historian, neither Latin nor Greek, who had recounted or praised the deeds and regimes of the people of Rome in a fitting way. He believed that this was necessary and proper for two reasons. First, on account of their honor, lest such men, given who they were, be deprived of the honor and the praise that was suitable and appropriate for [25] them; and, second, to benefit and stimulate those who come after them, the people who live in later times. For people who live in future times will look at this history and at what kinds of men their ancestors were who reached such levels of prosperity and glory through their prudence, virtues, and the advantages that they had; and they will imitate their ancestors and strive to become like them as much as possible and be worthy of their fatherland and race. And if they become like them, they too will enjoy the favor and providence of the gods just as their ancestors had. Thus they will not seem to other people to be dishonorable and petty, a reproach and insult upon their fathers, grandfathers, and ancestors, or said to be wholly unworthy children or descendants of such parents, fathers, and ancestors, given who the latter were.

Rather, their fathers too will be considered honorable and good and useful because of their children, and their ancestors will receive more glory and honor than they actually had when they lived if their descendants become honorable and noble too. For the honor that comes to parents from their children is most needed, sweet, and precious, much more so than that which parents themselves might acquire through their own deeds. The honor that comes from deeds dissipates quickly, but that which comes from descendants abides for centuries. Not [26] only that, every man among the descendants of those men, if he is educated and prudent, will learn from this history that he had ancestors who were good, useful, brave, and with advantages in all areas; also that there is need for him to study in order to become either superior to and more admirable than his parents or, at least, equal and similar to them, lest his noble and honorable mindset fall short of the heights and majesty of his ancestral virtue and parental advantages, in which case his deeds would be unworthy and unbefitting his race and ancestors. When this happens, and the good imitate the good, the prudent imitate the prudent, the brave imitate the brave, and the advantaged imitate the advantaged, then noteworthy men will be found there, admirable men who are equal to the gods and who are as foundations for Rome and all Roman cities and polities; they are the principles of the prosperity and the glory of the empire of the Romans.⁴³ Just as their ancestors made Rome great, glorious, and proud where it had once been small, inglorious, and humble, so too they will take a great and glorious city and make it greater and more glorious, or at any rate they will hold it safely and securely to the same honor, glory, and prosperity to which their fathers had raised it. It takes great knowledge and prudence and is a great advantage [27] just to be able to maintain and secure a state in the condition in which one received it so that it is not diminished, humbled, or despised. Such men are those who free cities from dangers in times of war, advantaged and educated men who increase and augment them in times of peace. I may accomplish this through my history, says Dionysios, and make it possible for such men to emerge. Reasoned discourse educates and perfects man and separates him from the ranks of the animals. Irrational men differ from the animals only in having a soul, but in all other respects they are similar to the animals. Should I accomplish this, he says, I will in some manner pay back the great debt that I owe to Rome for the many benefits I have received from her. This, then, is the second reason that caused Dionysios to write this history.

29. THE THIRD REASON WHY DIONYSIOS TURNED TO THE

HISTORY OF ROME⁴⁴

The third and final motive behind his history is to enable Dionysios himself to leave behind a famous name in the world and a reputation among posterity for wisdom and the love that he felt for those magnificent and brave men and for their great and admirable deeds, which he recounts and praises in all candor and exact verification.⁴⁵ The historian claims, maintains, assures us, and proves that there is an argument that is universal, true, and agreed upon by all men who have ever lived, both those who are wise and unwise, according to which every man has the same type of soul, [28] mentality, and condition as do the things that he loves and in which he deals as well as do those people whom he loves, who are his friends, and whose company he keeps. The way to test each soul and mentality is to see how it treats each thing that it loves. This is clear from the nature of things, which God created. Every thing, not only that which has perception but that which lacks it too, loves its own kind and is drawn to it. That is why he too draws the conclusion that, based on his own history, he also will be known among both posterity and his contemporaries as a good, noble, magnificent, and honorable man. For he loves and praises through his writings that same type of men and their deeds. Each person will say about him too that he belonged to that type of men whom he loved and honored and whose deeds and successes he labored to recount and write down. This causes him to have immortal glory among all future generations similar to that of those men who actually performed those great and admirable achievements. These are the three reasons, as he says, through which he came to write the history of Rome and the Romani. On the last two of these reasons he says the things that we have repeated and others too, as much as seemed sufficient to him at the beginning of the book. But on the first reason, that is that he wanted to remove from [29] the Greeks the deluded notions that they had about the Romani, he offers a long and great argument with many powerful proofs from the ancient histories of the Greeks through which he establishes that the race of the Romani was Greek. He is very concerned to prove this, because there was no other way to remove the stigma of barbarism from the race of the Romani.

30. THE FIRST FLEET OF THE GREEKS TO ITALY, LED BY OINOTROS⁴⁶

He says, then, that a certain Oinotros sailed out with a large fleet from the

Peloponnese, that is from the land now called the Morea, specifically from Arkadia, and he settled in the places where Rome was later built. Those men were called Oinotrians and the entire land Oinotria after Oinotros' name.

31. THE SECOND GREEK FLEET TO ITALY, OF THE SO-CALLED PELASGIANS⁴⁷

A second Greek fleet sailed out, again from the Peloponnese, and settled in Thessaly. Thessaly is what we call the regions of Thessalonike and Larissa, which is also called Macedonia.⁴⁸ From Thessaly it crossed the Ionian Sea, which they now call the Venetian Sea, and reached this region of Rome where they mingled with the Oinotrians. These Greeks were called Pelasgians from the name of their king, Pelasgos.

32. A THIRD GREEK FLEET TO ITALY, LED BY EUANDROS⁴⁹

A third Greek fleet reached Italy, this one too from Arkadia, from the city called Pallantion. The people of this city were in a state of civil war and divided into two parts. The one faction could not endure the contempt [30] of the other and so they chose a certain man named Euandros as their leader and ruler; building ships, they too crossed over to Italy, to the region of Rome, and settled there along with the Oinotrians and Pelasgians, the Greek races about which we spoke. This group settled by the Tiber river, which today flows through the middle of Rome.

33. FOURTH GREEK FLEET TO ITALY, LED BY HERAKLES⁵⁰

A fourth Greek fleet reached Italy from the Peloponnese, from the city which is called Argos. Argos is a city in the Peloponnese, which the Venetians hold today. It was Herakles who led that fleet to those parts of Italy. Herakles was the one whom the Latins call *Ercula*. This Herakles was a great and powerful king, wise, just, brave, virtuous, and prepared for everything, and so because of his virtues and good qualities he was called the son of Zeus and a god.

34. FOR WHAT REASON HERAKLES WENT OFF TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

This Herakles, then, built a great fleet and went off to those regions as far as the

end of the earth, namely to the lower straits⁵¹ which the Latins call *streto zublita*.⁵² At the mouth of these straits is the boundary of the western lands. He went there for the following reason, because the kings and rulers of those lands were evil-minded, ruled through the mob, and were unjust, and it was his goal to eject them from their thrones and give the latter over to other kings who would be good, virtuous, civilized, and just. He did so and tamed that whole region of the world. When he reached the ends [31] of the earth, he set up two pillars there and upon them two stelai, or bronze images of himself, to commemorate and mark the event, and these are called the Pillars of Herakles; the Latins call them the columns of *Ercule*.

35. HOW HERAKLES WAS HONORED AS A GOD

Herakles turned back and came to the Tiber river where those who lived there greeted him; they were Greeks, as we said above, and they honored him as a god, built a temple for him, and performed sacrifices to him as to a god, all on account of the deeds that he performed. Many of the Greeks who were with him saw that the land was good and fertile and they saw that Greeks also lived there, so they begged Herakles to allow them to settle there in that place with the local Greeks. For most of them were weak and sick due to their labors, the campaign, and the wars, and they were no longer able to make the effort again to return and cross that much ground again. When Herakles heard their plea, he left many of them in that place, but he returned to Argos along with the rest.

36. THAT THOSE GREEKS LEFT BEHIND IN ITALY BY HERAKLES SETTLED ON THE HILL CALLED SATURNIUS, LATER THE CAPITOLINE

The Greeks of Herakles settled on a hill or a small mountain which was then called Saturnius, after the name of the god Saturnus, whom the Greeks call Kronos but the Latins Saturnus. Now that hill is called the Capitoline and is today inside Rome. It was named the Capitoline for the following reason.

37. THAT THE HILL WAS CALLED THE CAPITOLINE FROM THE HEAD THAT WAS FOUND IN THIS HILL WHEN A TEMPLE WAS BEING BUILT BY TARQUINIUS' GRANDSON⁵³

In later times, when Rome had been founded and settled, a king came to rule in it [32] after many other kings, and his name was Tarquinius. He was at war with the peoples that surrounded Rome. When it came to the point where the armies had to clash, he was frightened and became cowardly. He prayed that if he were to win that battle he would make an altar and a great and ornamented temple to his god Dias, who is also called Zeus, in Latin Jupiter. Tarquinius won in that battle and began to build the temple on this hill, which was then called Saturnius, but he did not manage to put down the foundations before he died. After many years his grandson began to complete the project of his grandfather. When the men were digging for the foundations, the head of a man was found beneath the earth; it had been cut and much warm blood flowed from it. When they saw this the men were shocked and afraid, and they reported this to king Tarquinius. He summoned his senators, seers, wise men, and priests, and they went off in great fear and even terror to see this uncanny prodigy. He asked the seers what this uncanny and terrifying prodigy meant. They said that they themselves were unable to say what it meant, for it surpassed their art and wisdom. They advised the king to send envoys, or *apocrisiarii*, to Tuscany. The coast between [33] Rome and the lower regions was then called Tuscany. There was a separate kingship then, great and more powerful than the kingship of Rome at that time. The seers said that there was a great and admirable seer there who would be able to explain and indicate what the prodigy meant, but that no one else could do it. The king did this and sent envoys to that seer. The seer listened to the envoys and understood that this prodigy had occurred to the great benefit of Rome, but he wanted to give them an interpretation and explanation that was different from the true one. They begged him to tell them the entire truth and not to reason falsely with them by giving them a random answer.

38. VERDICT OF THE SEER REGARDING THE HEAD FOUND IN THE SATURNIAN HILL IN THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE TEMPLE UNDER CONSTRUCTION⁵⁴

Bested by their entreaties, the seer said to them: “Depart, Roman men, and tell your king and all the Romans that the place in which this head was found will become the head of the entire world, but this will happen through much war, slaughter, and blood.” The envoys heard this and reported it to the king and to all the Romans in great joy, and the king zealously constructed the temple of Zeus. From that time on the hill was called the Capitoline, that is the place of the head;

for the Romans call heads *capita*. Because of this event, the later kings made *moneta*, namely their own special *stampa*, by which they minted coins having the following inscription for Rome: *Roma caput mundi*, that is to say [34] “Rome, head of the world,” according to the seer’s verdict.⁵⁵

39. THAT THIS HILL WAS ALSO NAMED TARPEIAN AFTER THE WOMAN, TARPEIA, WHO SURRENDERED THE FORT ON IT TO THE SABINES

As Dionysios says, this hill was first called Saturnius, as we said, and was later called Tarpeian, for a different reason, after a woman, Tarpeia; because of its length, I will write nothing about it.⁵⁶ Finally, for the reason just mentioned, it was named the Capitoline. To return to the point from which we departed, before Rome was built and these events took place, the Greeks who, as we said, had been left in Italy by Herakles, made their settlement on this hill which was then called the Saturnius, so that Dionysios has shown that the Greeks, or Greek races, went off to settle Italy and the regions of Rome four times. He says all this in order to show that all those peoples at the site of Rome were Greek and to strike from the mind of the Greeks the notion that they were barbarian peoples who lived there before the foundation of Rome. But he knows this too, that these things are quite ancient and few know about them.

40. THAT IT IS CLEAR AND AGREED UPON THAT ROME WAS FOUNDED AND SETTLED BY THE DESCENDANTS OF THE TROJANS⁵⁷

What is clear and indisputable is that Rome was founded by the descendants of Aeneas. Aeneas was one of the rulers of Troy. When Troy was taken by the Greeks, he fled and came to Italy and there he founded Lavinium; after a while his descendants founded Rome there and settled it. [35] As this was clear and agreed upon, and the Greeks held the Trojans to be barbarians, this meant that by necessity the descendants of barbarians were also barbarians, by which we come to the conclusion that the Romani too, who founded Rome, were the descendants of barbarians and so were themselves barbarians. For this reason he hastens and is compelled to prove that the race of the Trojans was not barbarian, but Greek, good, honorable, and distinguished. It is in connection with this proof that he also mentions the island of Samothrace, through which we came to these arguments

in the first place.

41. THAT BARBARISM IS A FUNCTION OF RACE AND LANGUAGE, NOT RELIGION

If someone should ask how it was that the Greeks held the Trojans to be barbarians given that they had the same religion and worshipped and honored the same gods, we would reply that being a barbarian is not a function of religion but is understood in terms of race, language, the constitution of one's polity, and education. For we are all Christians and have one religion and share the same baptism with many nations, but we hold the Bulgarians, Vlachs, Albanians, Russians, and many other peoples to be barbarians, and we call them that. Likewise the Greeks had the same religion as a host of other nations but all who were not of their race and who did not speak the Greek language they called barbarians.

42. PROOF THAT THE RACE OF THE TROJANS WAS GREEK⁵⁸

Dionysios speaks in this way about the race of the Trojans, namely that the race of the Trojans was Greek and the people of the Troad were the descendants of Greeks who had left the Peloponnese and settled in this [36] place before Troy was built there. Other Greek historians and chroniclers have said this too before me. But I want to say something about it too, in brief.

43. CONCERNING ATLAS, THE KING OF ARKADIA, AND HIS DAUGHTERS⁵⁹

There are certain things that Dionysios wants to say about this issue, and they are as follows. Inside the Peloponnese, a place that we said was today called the Morea, there is a place called Arkadia, even down to today. In this Arkadia, in ancient times, one person became the first king, and his name was Atlas. His residence was on a range, that is a mountain of Arkadia, called Kaukasion. This king had a wife named Pleione and from this wife he bore seven daughters, and each of them had the following names, in order: Maïa, Taygete, Kelaino, Merope, Sterope, Alkyone, Elektra.⁶⁰ Those were their own individual names, but they all had a collective name too after their mother Pleione, and this was the Pleiades. As the Greeks said in their babblings – for such were the lecherous and licentious

gods that they had – Zeus fell in love with one of the seven, Elektra, and kept her as his wife. The other six sisters preferred virginity and modesty and took no men.

44. HOW ZEUS TURNED THE DAUGHTERS OF ATLAS INTO STARS

Zeus admired and praised their virtue. In order to honor and glorify them and make them immortal, he turned them into stars and placed them in the heavens. After this he turned Elektra too, his wife, into a star, [37] because she did not want to be parted from her sisters, and so he placed her too with her sisters, the other six in the heavens. But later, when Elektra learned from Zeus that the city of Troy, which was founded by the descendants of this same Elektra, as we are about to say below – that it was going to be destroyed and captured by a Greek fleet on account of Helen, the wife of Menelaos, lest she witness this tragedy from the high place in the heavens where she stood with her sisters, she left her sisters and went away.

45. THAT, ACCORDING TO THE MYTH, THE SO-CALLED SIX STARS⁶¹ OR POULIA ARE THE DAUGHTERS OF ATLAS

The six sisters, then, abided and stayed behind in the heavens in the place where they were positioned originally by Zeus, and they are what we call the Six Stars, also known as the Pleiades, which, in a barbarian fashion, common folk call the Poulia. That is the myth regarding the Pleiades, the sisters of Elektra, and I put it down here for entertainment. Let us now return to history.

46. THE GENEALOGY OF DARDANOS AND HIS SONS⁶²

Zeus, as we said above, joined with Elektra, the daughter of Atlas, the king of Arkadia, and had two sons with her, Jason and Dardanos. Jason took a wife but honored and preserved her virginity. Dardanos took as his wife the daughter of lord Pallas named Chryse. With Chryse, then, Dardanos had two sons, Idaios and Deimas. Jason, Dardanos, and the two brothers Idaios and Deimas, the sons of Dardanos, received the throne of Atlas when the latter died [38] as a paternal and parental inheritance and they reigned in Arkadia.

47. CONCERNING THE GREAT FLOOD THAT HAPPENED IN

ARKADIA AND HOW THE ARKADIANS FLED FROM THERE ON ACCOUNT OF THE SCARCITY OF FOOD⁶³

After that there was a great flood in Arkadia and all the fields, that is all the valleys, became like a vast lake from the surfeit of water. The people, fearing the flood, went up to the high mountains and settled there. Many seasons passed and the fields remained idle and useless for cultivation on account of the surfeit of water, so the people were hard-pressed to find food, settled as they were in the mountains. There was little soil high up in the mountains and this too was rocky, could not bear much fruit, and was unable to feed so many people. On account of this need, then, and lest everyone perish together from the famine, they took counsel with each other and divided into two groups. The first group would stay in Arkadia, and they established as the king of themselves and of the whole of Arkadia one of the sons of Dardanos, Deimas, while Dardanos received the second group along with his brother Jason and son Idaios. He made a fleet large enough and departed from Arkadia and sailed along Europe, that is he followed the western coast until he reached the regions of Thrace by the Melas gulf, ending up at an island of Thrace. To explain what I mean by Europe and Thrace, by which [39] Thrace the island lies at which the Arkadian fleet stopped, I will briefly pause my historical account.

48. CONCERNING THE DIVISION OF THE ENTIRE EARTH INTO ASIA, LIBYA, AND EUROPE

The ancient historians and geographers divided the entire earth with reason and intelligence into three parts. They called one part Asia, the second Europe, and the third Libya and Africa, for this part has two names. As some geographers say, Asia starts at the Tanaïs river, which common folk call Tanas, but others say that it starts from the Phasis river which is by Trebizond, and it reaches to the outlet of the Nile river, which flows out into the sea of Alexandria. This part is called Asia. Then, from the outlet of the Nile, which as I said flows into the sea of Alexandria, and as far as the one edge of the earth, the eastern one,⁶⁴ I mean the mouth of the lower straits which, as we said above, the Latins call *stretum zublita*,⁶⁵ is called Libya and Africa. Then, from the Phasis river or the Tanaïs toward the tramontane⁶⁶ and as far as the other promontory of the lower straits, where we said earlier that Herakles traveled and set up his columns, is called Europe. In common parlance, these two parts of the earth, namely Asia and

Europe, are called east and west. Libya is also understood as being east because it too tends toward the south, where the sun is always to be found. For Europe is more distant from the sun than those two parts and for this reason it is called west. That is why Dionysios [40] says that the Arkadian fleet came to the regions of Thrace by Europe: that is to say it did nothing but sail along the coast of Europe, that is of the west – for the Peloponnese is in Europe – and it arrived at the regions of Thrace. Thus we have spoken about what Europe is. We also ought to speak about what Thrace is. It is necessary to understand that just as the earth was divided by the geographers into Asia, Europe, and Libya, so too is each one of these parts divided into names that we call “eparchies,” which the Latins call provinces. Asia has many provinces and Europe likewise and Libya likewise, some of them old and some of them new. For these eparchies (or, what is to say the same thing, these provinces) were named in one way by the ancients and another by the moderns. Sometimes one large province contains within it one or two small provinces, just as Macedonia has Thessaly and Thrace has Macedonia, and many others have many others.

49. CONCERNING THRACE, WHAT IT IS

Thrace is the name of the entire region which, if one wants to traverse it, he starts from the Nesos river, which laymen call the Mestos,⁶⁷ and reaches Philippopolis, and then from Philippopolis going up he traverses that entire region and ends up at the promontory of the western mouth of the upper straits which commoners call Pharos;⁶⁸ then, going down the entire western straits from there he ends up at the promontory of the western mouth called Sestos – there was city [41] named Sestos there, and commoners call the promontory Krithea – and again from there he follows the coast of the Melas gulf, which commoners call the Margarisian gulf, to Ainos, and the parts around Ainos as far as Maroneia, and from there on until he ends up again at the Nesos river: this is the outline, and the entire land is called Thrace.

50. THAT DARDANOS LEFT ARKADIA AND ENDED UP WITH HIS FLEET AT SAMOTHRACE, AND HOW THIS ISLAND WAS CALLED SAMOTHRACE⁶⁹

As we said, then, Dionysios says that the Arkadian fleet of Dardanos reached the region of Thrace by following the western coast, and they disembarked on a

certain island of Thrace, namely the one that is now called Samothrace. He says that he knows nothing about whether this island was inhabited before this fleet arrived or was uninhabited. But he knows this, that from that time onward this island was named Samothrace; before this it had no other name. The name of the island came about through the conjunction of two names into one compound name, which the Latins call a “composite.” From the opposite mainland, which is called Thrace, and Samon, one of the Greeks with this fleet who stayed there, built a city, settled the island, and became its master, it was named Samothrace, that is to say the Thrace of Samon. This Samon was the son of the god Hermes, whom the Latins call Mercury. Hermes is also a star in the sky just as Zeus is, and he is also one of the false and non-existent Greek gods. [42] As Dionysios says, Samon was the son of this god Hermes and of a certain nymph called Rene, who lived in a mountain of Arkadia called Kyllene.

51. CONCERNING NYMPHS, WHAT THEY ARE, HOW MANY SPECIES OF THEM THERE ARE, AND THAT THEY ARE A RACE OF DAEMONS, WHICH COMMONERS IN A BARBARIAN FASHION CALL NEREIDS

A nymph is a daemon that has taken the form of a woman. According to the delusions of the Greeks, there are many various types of nymphs. They call some of them Orestiads, those which live in the mountains, and because of this they are called Orestiads after *oros* (mountain). Women today, following Greek tradition, call them “those outside.” For Christians still smell and reek of Greek unseemliness. For this reason they call them “those outside,” that is those who dwell outside in the mountains and the hills. Those of them who dwell in the sea are called nereids. According to the Greek myths, there was a sea-god called Nereus. His daughters were called nereids after him, but women who speak in a more barbarian fashion call them *neragides*. Others are called hydriads, being those who dwell in cisterns, that is in wells, and in springs, lakes, and rivers. They are called hydriads because they live in water. Still others have different names based on the places where they live, but the common and universal name for them all is nymph. The Greeks worshipped them too as secondary goddesses.

52. WHAT CUSTOM THE GREEKS HAD AND HOW THEY CALLED ADVANTAGED MEN HEROES AND ADVANTAGED WOMEN NYMPHS

These Greeks had a custom: when [43] they saw an advantaged man who had some exceptional virtue or great talent, they would call him a hero in order to honor him (whether he was alive or dead) – a hero is technically someone who is descended from a god on only one side – and they pretended that one of the gods had intercourse with a woman and produced him. Likewise with advantaged women who had some great virtue: they called them nymphs, as if they had surpassed the nature of mortal women through their virtue and had risen up to the level and nature of the nymphs, who were immortal and secondary goddesses.

53. WHAT THE ATHENIANS DID WHEN CAESAR WENT TO ATHENS

This is what the Athenians did when Caesar went to Athens. They made a certain contraption which Caesar was to cross in order to enter into Athens, and they wrote upon this contraption, as if coming from their mouth and addressed to Caesar, that:

to the degree that you are a man, to that same degree you are a god, that is, to the extent that you believe that you are man by nature, to the same extent you are a god because of your deeds.

Thus it seems that the mother of Samon, Rene, was an advantaged and extraordinary woman; because of her virtue, the Greeks told myths about her and elevated her to the rank of the nymphs in which they believed. Be that as it may, according to history this Samon was the founder and he named Samothrace after himself.

54. THAT THE GREEKS AND DARDANOS SPENT A LITTLE TIME ON SAMOTHRACE, BUT MOST OF THEM WENT BACK TO THE EAST⁷⁰

To return to our first account, the Greeks who were on Samothrace with the fleet [44] were dwelling there, namely Dardanos, Jason, and Idaios, with whom there was Samon and the rest of the people. After spending a little time on the island they became disaffected with it because they could not find food easily or in sufficient quantity. For the land on this island was not enough for such a multitude, being, as it seems, hard and not especially fruitful. Its sea was also

stormy and without good harbors, and for these reasons they did not have enough food to be content. They were suffering terribly from the hard land and the stormy sea. Taking counsel with each other again, they left a small portion of their people behind there with Samon, as many as they conjectured that the land could feed. Dardanos and his son Idaios crossed to the east along with the rest of his people.

55. CONCERNING THE DEATH OF IASOS, THE BROTHER OF DARDANOS, BY LIGHTING ON SAMOTHRACE⁷¹

His brother Iasos died on Samothrace from a lightning bolt. Lightning is what laymen call *arêkon*.⁷² Zeus struck him with lightning because he did not marry and wanted to practice ascetic virginity, but later he fell in love and desired to have sex with the goddess Demeter. She was the sister of Zeus, and an inventor and benefactor through the fruits of the earth, and later on we will say how she was the sister of Zeus. Furious at Iasos' shameful behavior, that being a man he wanted to have sex with a goddess, Zeus struck him with lightning and he died. Now Dardanos, [45] as we said, along with his son Idaios and the rest of his people crossed over to the east and entered into the mouth of the straits, exiting at a certain place in the land of the Hellespont.

56. CONCERNING THE HELLESPONT, WHAT IT IS, AND THE HISTORY OF HOW IT CAME TO BE CALLED THE HELLESPONT

We call Hellespont the sea from Kyzikos to the lower mouth of the strait, and based on the following myth or history. A certain king of Thebes named Athamas had a wife named Ino. By the command of the goddess Hera, whom the Latins call Juno, he abandoned her and took another one named Nephele. With Nephele he had one son named Phrixos and a daughter named Helle. But then Athamas secretly had sex with Ino again. Nephele saw this and became jealous; she fled, leaving her children at the house of her husband Athamas. Athamas saw this and took Ino back into his house openly as his wife. But Ino had always been plotting against her step-children Phrixos and Helle and was seeking a way, as a step-mother, to kill them. There was a famine in those regions and the Athenians⁷³ sent envoys to the oracle to ask about this famine. These envoys came to the house of Athamas and were suborned by Ino with many gifts to say upon their return from the oracle that if the children of Athamas, Phrixos and

Helle, were not butchered and sacrificed to the gods, the famine would never end in those regions. So they returned and did report that. [46] Athamas now, not knowing what to do, wanted to give them over to the slaughter and to be sacrificed to the gods. But god took pity on the children, lest they die unjustly. He came to Phrixos and explained everything to him, that they were at risk of dying unjustly. He advised him to take his sister and go to the manger where his father kept his sheep. He was to find the largest ram in the manger and sit upon it with his sister. He did this: he found the ram and both he and his sister sat upon it. The ram, then, immediately rose up into the air and crossed from Thebes over to the east. Phrixos was a man and so was able to keep up and hold on despite the violence and flight of the ram, but Helle was a woman and unable. When they came to the straits, she was no longer able to hold on and there she fell into the sea and was not seen again. The sea there was named Hellespont after her, that is to say it is the *pontos* or sea of Helle, or “the fall into the sea” (*pontismos*) where she fell into the sea. That is how the Hellespont got its name, so the Greeks say.

57. HOW DARDANOS AND HIS SON IDAIOS SPLIT UP⁷⁴

As we said, Dardanos and his people landed on the eastern part of the Hellespont. After landing there, they divided into two groups. Idaios, the son of Dardanos, took half the people and departed from the coast, striking inland. He went up into the high mountains of that land and settled there, in the land that [47] Dionysios says was later named Phrygia, but then it had a different name.

58. WHAT IS THE LAND CALLED PHRYGIA

Phrygia is the entire land reaching from Asos, which people today call Machrame,⁷⁵ or rather from the eastern promontory which the ancients called Abydos after the city that existed there, which today they call Yenishehir, meaning “new fort” in the Turkish language –from there, then, the entire circuit, coast, and the land above the coast as far as the Hermos river, about which we said above that we call it the Tarchaneiotes,⁷⁶ is called Phrygia. Ionia also begins at this river, facing forward, as we said at the beginning.

59. THAT IDAIOS SETTLED IN THE HIGH MOUNTAINS OF PHRYGIA, WHICH HE NAMED IDAIA⁷⁷

As was said, Idaios, the son of Dardanos, settled with half the people in the nearby high mountains of this land, which was later named Phrygia, and he named these mountains Idaia after himself. The ancients had the habit of naming the places over which they reigned after their own names, and likewise with groups of people, such as the Hellenes after Hellen, the Latins after Latinos, Italy the land after Italos, and the Peloponnese after Pelops. So these mountains were named Idaia after Idaios, which is to say “the mountains of Idaios.”

60. WHAT TURKS TODAY CALL THE IDAIAN MOUNTAINS

These are the mountains which the Turks today call Kaz Dag in their own language, which means the Hill of Geese. Kaz for them means a goose and Dag is a mountain. I do not [48] know how it is that the Turks named it this way, but I can guess that those animals live wild on those mountains in great numbers. For the Turks always name things because of some random thing. Idaios, then, settling in these mountains built a temple there to the mother of the Greek and non-existent gods.

61. CONCERNING THE MOTHER OF THE GREEK GODS, REA, AND CONCERNING KRONOS HER HUSBAND, AND THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS

The mother of these gods, according to the Greeks, was Rea. The Greeks say in their myths that the first and most ancient god was Kronos, whom we said that the Latins call Saturnus. He took Rea as his wife, whom the Latins call Opis. He bore on her three sons and three daughters, Zeus, who in Latin is called Jupiter; Poseidon, whom the Latins call Neptunus; and Hades who is also called Pluto – the Latins call him Dis and Pluto – as well as Hera, whom, as we said, the Latins call Juno; Hestia, whom the Latins call Vesta; and Demeter, whom the Latins call Ceres, with whom Iasos wanted to have sex and, for that reason, was struck by lightning on Samothrace, as was said,⁷⁸ and died. While his father Kronos was still reigning, Zeus passionately loved his sister Hera for three hundred years and finally had sex with her secretly. She gave birth to a club-footed son, namely the one whom laymen call lame Hephaistos. [49] He is the god of fire.

62. THIS HEPHAISTOS IS CALLED VULCAN IN LATIN

Later, after Zeus had expelled his own father Kronos from the position of power,

he bound him, cast him into Tartaros, and divided his kingdom among his brothers.

63. DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM OF KRONOS AMONG HIS SONS

Zeus himself, as the first-born, took the heavens and the ether, namely the place of the stars and air down to the face of the earth. The second, his brother Poseidon, took the face of the earth and the entire sea.

64. WHY HADES IS CALLED PLUTO

As for Hades, who is called Charon and Pluto because he is always receiving and never gives anything away – for this is what enrichment is, to always get and never give – received as his kingdom the regions beneath the earth and sea, which are called both subterranean and below-ground. Zeus took his lover and beloved Hera openly and undisputed as his wife, as he was no longer afraid of his father. Hestia and Demeter, the two sisters, were left without an inheritance and with no portion in the kingdom of their father. But they too are goddesses given that they are of divine stock and have great powers and manifestations.

65. WHAT THE POWER OF THE GODDESS HESTIA IS AND OF THE GODDESS DEMETER

Hestia has the power to guard and protect cities and the homes of men. For this reason, the ancients, when they were building a city, would build the temple of Hestia first before those of the other gods to guard and protect the city, and they preserved in it an unquenchable fire [50] lit throughout the year and guarded by virgin women lest it go out. Not only that, but the place in every household where a fire is lit is called an *hestia* (hearth) and its fire is called that of Hestia.

66. THAT THE *PYROSTIA* (FIRE-HEARTH) IS CALLED THE FIRE OF HESTIA

That which is barbarically called *parastia*, and by others *pyroastia*, signifies the same thing as that mentioned above. What should be called the fire of Hestia is barbarically called *pyroastia*, so that the place in which it is lit in each household is like a temple of Hestia, and the fire in it is called the fire of Hestia. Demeter, through which Iasos was burned, is the goddess of agriculture and of all the fruits of the earth, and farmers honor her as do those who wish to feed themselves and

become rich based on the land. From Zeus, then, and from the other gods whom we mentioned sprang a host of male and female gods and demigods. The mother and fore-mother of them all is Rea, the wife of Kronos, just as for us human beings it is Eve. Idaios, then, built a temple for this Rea in the Idaian mountains in which he settled, and he established and instituted sacrifices and festivals for this goddess, which, as the historian says, remained and were still performed down to his own days, just as Idaios instituted them. That was what Idaios did, and he settled in those regions.

67. CONCERNING DARDANOS, HOW HE SETTLED IN THE HELLESPONT AND EVEN BUILT A CITY, DARDANON⁷⁹

His father Dardanos settled inside the straits on the coast by the land that was later called the Troad, and he built a city in this [51] place which he named Dardanon after himself. It was Teukros, the king of that land, who granted him the place where he settled and built his city in order to live there. He was then the king of that place, and the land was named Teukris after him. Many other historians mention this Teukros, especially Phanidemos,⁸⁰ who wrote the history of ancient Athens and about the region of Athens: he was an Athenian magistrate in charge of a deme called *exypotaieos*.⁸¹ For the Athenians were divided into demes just as the Genoese are now divided into the so-called *arberga*.⁸² Every demos had its own name just as every *arbergo* has its own name, such as the Spinola, Doria, and so on. All their demes had magistrates, one magistrate per demos. A demos is the populace and assembly of a people.⁸³ So this Teukros was the magistrate in charge of the demos called *exypotaieos*, and he received this demos either with the consent of the other Athenians or without their consent – this is not clear. He had departed from Athens many years previously and passed to the east to this place in the Troad, but before it was named Troad and before a city had been built in it. He found the land there to be abundant, good, fertile, and fruit-bearing, and there were only a few local barbarians living [52] there. He prevailed and conquered as much of the land as he ἡπυδῆθη⁸⁴ and seized in his first attack. After that, he faced daily wars with the local barbarians and the other nations who lived near his land, either because he wanted to seize the remainder of the barbarians' land as well or in order to stand strong and not be dislodged from the land that he took. So when Teukros saw that Dardanos and the Greeks with him had moved on from Samothrace and come to those parts of

his land, he was exceedingly happy and received them gladly, first because they were Greeks, and so of his own people; second, in order to have them as helpers and allies in the war that he waged every day against the barbarians; and, third, in order to populate his land. Most of it was empty because he had few people in scarce numbers. For these reasons Teukros gladly received Dardanos and the Greeks and gave them land in which to settle and build cities too. As we said above, Dardanos then built the city which he named Dardanon after himself.

68. THAT THE LAND OF THE TROJANS WAS SETTLED BY BOTH DARDANOS AND TEUKROS WHICH MAKES THE TROJANS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS GREEKS

Dionysios says these things and recounts the story about Samothrace to prove, as we said above, that the race of the Trojans was Greek, in part from king Teukros, who was an Athenian and came to settle those regions with his people, and in part from Dardanos and the Greeks [53] who were with him, who came from Arkadia and settled first in Samothrace and, when they left there, settled with Teukros in those regions. He does this to show that in all respects the Trojans and their descendants were Greek by race, and so the final conclusion can be drawn that the Romani, who were the descendants of Aeneas and the other Trojans who were with him when he came to Italy, were not barbarians, tribal people, or uncultured, but Greeks and the descendants of Greeks, and so they were honorable and useful people. And this was the reason why he mentions Samothrace, as we said.

69. ANOTHER REASON WHY DIONYSIOS MENTIONS SAMOTHRACE⁸⁵

The other reason why he mentions Samothrace again in another passage of the same book and argument is on account of the idols of certain Greek and Trojan gods that Aeneas transported from Troy to Italy and placed in Lavinium. From Lavinium his descendants moved to Alba, a large city that they built. These same idols then left Alba at night and were found at Lavinium. Many years later they were found at Rome, as Dionysios says. He too saw in Rome in many temples not those original first idols but their images, that is the idols of the first idols that Aeneas had brought from Troy, as we said. He wants thereby to show that these Trojan gods of Aeneas were Greek, [54] they came from Arkadia with Dardanos

to Samothrace and, after that, departed from Samothrace with Dardanos to the regions of the Troad and were placed in the city of Dardanon, which Dardanos built; later they were placed in Ilion, which we call Troy, and from Troy in Lavinium, and from Lavinium in Rome, and he says all this in order to prove conclusively that the race of the Romani and their religion, gods, sacrifices to the gods, and all the modes of their polity were ancient and Greek. He thereby proves that the Romani were perfectly and universally Greek in all ways. This was his first, ultimate, and fundamental purpose, just as we said above. To discuss this too at length, we begin from the beginning of the Trojan War and go to the foundation of Rome, telling the story of these idols. And then we will give the argument concerning them.

70. CONCERNING THE ABDUCTION OF HELEN BY ALEXANDER-PARIS

Alexander-Paris, the son of Priam, went off to the Peloponnese, was received by Menelaos in his house, and given hospitality as if he were a god. But he fell in love with his wife Helen, abducted her, and fled. The Greeks could not put up with this shame and so they all set out to war: they departed and fought against Troy for ten years, but they were unable to capture it through war.

71. CONCERNING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TROJAN HORSE, THROUGH WHICH THE GREEKS CAPTURED TROY

In the end, they constructed a wooden horse and placed [55] seven hundred men in it, including Menelaos, the husband of Helen. The Greeks themselves got on their ships and made as if they were departing and returning to their lands. But they went off and waited by the island of Tenedos. The Trojans rejoiced. They came out and saw the wooden horse and were both amazed and frightened lest it be a trap. But the decision of god prevailed, which undermines the reasoning of men when it wants to destroy them, and so they chose the worse course that seems to them at the time to be the best and most excellent course; namely, they chose to place that horse inside the city as a boast and in commemoration of the fact that the Greeks had once come to Troy, fought against it for ten years, and turned back with nothing to show, leaving that wooden horse as a gift to Athena, who saved them from death, and departing back home. But as the horse did not fit inside through the gates of the city on account of its size, they tore down the walls and led it inside the city. Then they made a sacrifice to the gods and began

to eat and drink excessively. After that they fell into a deep slumber through their lack of care, their joy, drunkenness, and their toils for so many years. But the seven hundred men and Menelaos came out secretly, went up to the towers, and found them unguarded. They made fire-signals and torches, that is lanterns, to signal the fleet [56] at Tenedos, just as they had agreed among each other. When the fleet saw these lanterns, it came immediately and those with Menelaos opened the gates and received them. They came in and set fire to one part of the city to distress the people. Then they inflicted such harm upon the city as men are likely to do who are enemies and have endured ten long years in the war. They killed the poor Trojans, their wives, and children in their sleep, in the streets, and in their homes, and plundered their goods. They captured Priam and his entire household with all his sons and daughters; except for his father, they captured his entire family and all his lords.

72. CONCERNING THE FATHER OF PRIAM, LAOMEDON, AND HOW HE CROSSED OVER TO MYTILENE

Priam's father Laomedon crossed over to Mytilene before the war and rebuilt all the old buildings that were there, and he died and was buried there. For Troy ruled the territory from Smyrna, including Smyrna itself, and the entire coast as far as Troy itself and the islands of Chios, Mytilene, and Tenedos.

73. CONCERNING AENEAS, HOW HE WENT UP TO THE AKROPOLIS OF TROY WHEN HE REALIZED THAT THE GREEKS HAD ENTERED TROY⁸⁶

None of the lords realized that this catastrophe would happen to their city, except for Aeneas alone: some say that he formed this plan with the Greeks and knew about the plot. But most say that he grasped what was happening and took his household, [57] children, friends, relatives, and associates, and went up to the akropolis of Troy. An akropolis is what we call in Latin *koula*.⁸⁷ The akropolis had a select guard of brave soldiers, who were stationed there. The money of the kingdom was also there along with the money of the people of the city including anything good and precious that existed in the city, such as silver, gold, clothing, their gods, and all the shrines of their gods and idols. Aeneas went there and armed himself and his men for war. When the Greeks had their fill of blood and slaughter, they went up to fight against the akropolis too and seize the riches and

treasure that were there. The Trojans inside the akropolis with Aeneas fought vigorously as did the Greeks outside with Neoptolemos, the son of Achilles.

74. FLIGHT OF AENEAS FROM THE AKROPOLIS TO THE SAFETY OF THE HIGH MOUNTAINS OF TROY⁸⁸

When Aeneas saw that Neoptolemos was charging vigorously with his young men to scale the walls, he was greatly terrified and went into the temple of the idols that was inside the akropolis; he took the gods that were there, the shrines of the gods, the implements of their worship, the money, and many goods, and he opened some small hidden gates in a secret place through which he pushed his father first, who was an old man in a wagon, and the old men, the women, [58] and all the children first, and then he followed behind with the soldiers and the young men, all in safety. The Greeks did not see this happen; in a short while they had scaled the walls and found the akropolis empty of people, but they did find much money and they fell to plundering it. This gave those who were with Aeneas the chance to flee to the high mountains, where they sat in vigilance. Many people from the surrounding regions gathered there and they became a sizable army.

75. TREATY BETWEEN AENEAS AND THE GREEKS, AND THE ORACLE THAT AENEAS RECEIVED FROM THE GODS REGARDING HIS MIGRATION⁸⁹

Later they sent *apocrisiarii* to the Greeks and came to an agreement that Aeneas would take the people with him and their goods, he would make ships, that is boats, and would depart to any destination he wanted without fear or harm done to him by the Greeks. He also sent to the oracle and received an oracle about this. The oracle said that at the point where he disembarked from the ships and saw that his people had eaten their tables, at that place it would be in his interest to build a city and dwell there himself along with his people.

76. ARRIVAL OF AENEAS AT LAURENTUM IN ITALY WHERE HIS ARMY ATE THEIR TABLES, THAT IS THE CELERY THAT WAS LAID OUT UNDERNEATH⁹⁰

He acted according and constructed a fleet, crossed over to Italy, and landed at a

shore called Laurentum not far from the outlet of the Tiber river, that is where the Tiber river enters the sea, the river that today flows through the middle of Rome. There at Laurentum the men disembarked and [59] sat down to eat on the ground, that was green with edible plants. Among the vegetation there was also celery. After they had eaten, one of them considered where he had sat and eaten and he pulled up a stick of celery and ate it. Seeing him, another one sitting next to him did the same, and along with him another, and so on with all of them until they had eaten all the celery that was underneath their food. When Aeneas saw this thing, he understood what the oracle meant to signify, that this is the place where the gods have decreed that I settle.

77. CONCERNING THE SOW THAT GAVE BIRTH TO THIRTY IN THE PLACE WHERE AENEAS WAS GOING TO BUILD THE CITY ACCORDING TO THE ORACLE⁹¹

As the oracle said that when he was about to build the city he needed to have a four-footed guide to the place, he was at a loss what to do. But he took a pig to offer as a sacrifice to the gods. It happened, however, to be a female animal and pregnant. When he bound it to sacrifice it, it escaped by chance from the hands of the men and fled up, away from the coast. Aeneas understood that this was the fulfillment of the oracle. He commanded that no one should hunt the animal, lest it be forced by the pursuit to go elsewhere than where its own inclinations led it. He followed it and when the animal had gone three miles from the coast it grew weary from the labor and sat down there, giving birth to thirty piglets. It was then that Aeneas chiefly realized that the oracle was fulfilled. For the oracle said this too, namely that the four-footed [60] animal that was going to lead him to where he was going to build his city was going to give birth in that place; also, that, after as many years as the number of offspring borne by the four-footed animal, his descendants were going to build another great, populous, and prosperous city. It was referring to Alba. So Aeneas began to build his city in the place where the animal gave birth.

78. CONCERNING LATINOS, THE KING OF THE LAND OF THE LATINS⁹²

But the king of that land who was named Latinos learned what was happening⁹³ and came out to fight against Aeneas and the Greeks, to expel him from his land.

But the gods spoke at night to Latinos and told him to receive the man and his people and to treat him as a dear friend, for this would be greatly in his interest.

79. TREATY BETWEEN LATINOS AND AENEAS AND FOUNDATION OF LAVINIUM⁹⁴

So Latinos and Aeneas came to an agreement and Latinos gave his daughter Lavinia to Aeneas to be his wife and with her the land around that place and the coast. Aeneas built the city and named it Lavinia after his wife, which in Greek we call Lavinium. In this Lavinium Aeneas placed his Trojan gods, their shrines, and palladia, and he established festivals, sacrifices, and celebrations according to the modes that they had used for such things at Troy.

80. FOUNDATION OF ALBA LONGA THIRTY YEARS LATER⁹⁵

After thirty years, the people of Lavinium had increased in number and were hard pressed, so they dispatched men to build another great city [61] in a good and virtuous place, and they named it Alba Longa, which in the Greek language we would call White Long. They named it Longa to distinguish it from another Latin city called Alba; and they made it long in shape. They transported their Trojan gods into this newly built city along with all the shrines, and established them with great honor in a temple that they built for them. But at night they were found at Lavinium. And so they departed again and led them with even greater honors to Alba; and again at night they were found at Lavinium in the same place where Aeneas had established them originally. The Albans realized that the gods were more at rest in Lavinium than at Alba. They selected the six hundred most distinguished men of Alba and sent them to Lavinium and their sole concern and occupation was to be the honor, sacrifices, worship of these gods. Their expenses were covered by royal funds. Dionysios says that later, when Rome was built four hundred years after the foundation of Alba, they led those gods to Rome. He does not know how and who led them away, nor did anyone see those first gods in the open, except their images and idols, for those gods were hidden in the temple of Vesta, where the unquenchable fire was also guarded by the virgins. He says that I too saw many idols of these Trojan [62] gods and so have many others in the old and ancient temples of Rome. And in all of them they take the form of two young men, namely what the laymen call strapping lads, as if they were soldiers. These are the things that we saw.

81. THAT THE HISTORIAN KALLISTRATOS WROTE A SEPARATE HISTORY ABOUT THE ISLAND OF SAMOTHRACE⁹⁶

We are not able to write a history about them nor have we found anyone else who has written about them whom we can read, but we ought to read and copy what the historian Kallistratos writes about these Trojan gods, who wrote his own separate history about the island of Samothrace alone, where he recounts some things about these gods. For they passed through and departed from this island to go to Troy, and they came from Arkadia to this island. Likewise with all that Satyros says, who gathered together, composed, and wrote in a single book all the ancient myths of the Greeks that were scattered and disordered. He also speaks to the myths about those gods, as well as all that was said by many other historians and chroniclers about them, especially the most ancient among all the poets whom I know, Arktinos. The others except for Arktinos say that Dardanos, the son of Zeus, whom the latter begat on Elektra, the daughter of Atlas, as we said, took Chryse, the daughter of Pallas.

82. CONCERNING THE GODS AND THE PALLADIA THAT ATHENA GAVE TO CHRYSE, THE WIFE OF DARDANOS⁹⁷

Athena, the daughter of Zeus, who is called Minerva in Latin, gave as a dowry [63] to her sister-in-law Chryse – for Athena was also a daughter of Zeus and was born from his head in full armor, that is with weapons: she is the goddess of intelligence, because she was born from the head of Zeus – she gave to her sister-in-law the idols of the greatest gods. It is not clear of which gods these were, but some were from the gods in the shape of young soldiers, as was said above.⁹⁸ Athena also gave two other idols of herself to the aforementioned sister-in-law Chryse, which are called palladia after her name. For Athena is also called Pallas. Palladia are the idols of Pallas, but those idols of the gods and the palladia were not made by human hands. They were not made by people but by the gods and by Athena herself. To honor and to glorify her sister-in-law Athena gave them to her and taught her how she ought to honor them and perform festivals for them, sacrifices, and celebrations. As they were sent by the gods and not made by human hands, she also taught her other honors and secret, mystical sacrifices besides those which they performed for the other hand-made idols.

83. CONCERNING THE TEMPLES OF ATHENA AND ARES, AND

WHERE THEY WERE BUILT BY THE GREEKS

The goddess Athena was honored by the Greeks to the point of excess. They built her temples and performed her sacrifices and festivals inside the city, just as they did the opposite for the god Ares, who in Latin [64] is called Mars. They always made the altars of this god outside the city, for this god is the god of war, a star in the sky that brings evil. What they meant and signified through this was that people ought to keep the intelligence that Athena stood for inside the city – for intelligence is what orders, adorns, and makes useful the city and the polity – but war and battles, which are what Ares signifies, should be kept outside the city and not inside. War is an advantage when dealing with those outside the city and with enemies, but inside the city war is just destruction, dissolution, and an overturning from the very foundations. What else does war inside the city, or civil war, accomplish if not that? When Athena gave Chryse those gods and the palladia and taught her the sacrifices and their honors, she bid her to keep these things secret and not to tell them or reveal them to many people. She did this to preserve the honor and love for those gods and their sacrifices. For all people love, seek, desire, admire, and honor what is hidden, obscure, and secret, but what is revealed, easy, and accessible they neither desire, admire, or honor, but rather they look down on it. So Chryse and Dardanos had these things in Arkadia and they acted just as Athena had bid them.

84. THAT DARDANOS BUILT A TEMPLE ON SAMOTHRACE IN WHICH HE PLACED THE GODS AND THE PALLADIA⁹⁹

When the flood happened in Arkadia, [65] as we said above, and Dardanos and his people departed from there and came to the island of Thrace, namely to Samothrace, and lived there for a short amount of time, he built a temple there and placed these gods in it along with the palladia, sacrificing and honoring them in a mystical way according to Athena's instructions.

85. HOW DARDANOS DEPARTED FROM SAMOTHRACE, LEAVING SAMON THERE WITH A FEW PEOPLE¹⁰⁰

Later he departed from the island on account of the scarcity of food and the lack of relief, as we said above,¹⁰¹ and left Samon there along with a few of their people, which is why the island was named Samothrace, as was said above.¹⁰²

He also divided the sacred objects into two. He left the gods behind on the island as a concession to Samon and his people, but he took the palladia, except that he also made wooden or stone images of those gods whom he was leaving behind on the island, and he took these with him too.¹⁰³ As for the mystical sacrifices and anything else of a secret nature that he knew in honor of the gods, he taught it to Samon and his people, so that they could honor through them the gods whom he had left with them. From Samon and those first people, then, the later inhabitants of Samothrace learned these things and so the Samothracians performed them just as they had been taught by Dardanos until the days of the author Dionysios, that is until the days of Caesar.

86. HOW THE SAMOTHRACIANS BOASTED AND HELD THIS HONOR AMONG THE OTHER GREEKS ON ACCOUNT OF THESE GODS AND THEIR FESTIVALS AND THE MYSTERIES, WHICH THE REST OF THE GREEKS DID NOT KNOW¹⁰⁴

The Samothracians, then, boasted of this and they did not tell the other Greeks anything [66] concerning the names of the gods, their honors, and sacrifices; rather, they kept these things separate as their own from the rest of the Greeks as they were sent and taught to them uniquely by the gods. And they preserved this honor until the very end of Hellenism that came about through the grace of the first, true, and only God of the Holy Trinity. So much, then, concerning the gods that Dardanos left behind on Samothrace. Dardanos took the images of the gods whom he had left behind on the island and the original palladia and crossed over to the east where he was received by Teukros, the king of that land, and built the city there that he called Dardanon, as we said above.¹⁰⁵ When he was about to build the city he sent to the oracle to receive a prediction about his settlement of those regions and about the city he was about to build. Thus the oracle bade him concerning the honors of the images of the gods and the palladia.

87. THE ORACLE THAT DARDANOS RECEIVED CONCERNING THE CITY THAT HE BUILT AND CONCERNING THE HONORS OF THE GODS AND THE PALLADIA¹⁰⁶

Dardanos, in the city that you are building, legislate faith and reverence toward the gods whom you have with you, along with honors, festivals, and celebrations

in accordance with the instructions that you have received from Athena, so that they may become unending and immortal in the coming times. For know this, that if these amazing and honorable gifts which Athena gave to your wife Chryse are treated with honor and reverence and are honored and celebrated as they ought to be, then the city [67] in which they are found will never be taken by war nor will it fall into the hands of an enemy, but rather it will remain inviolable, unconquered, and uncaptured by all people and for the rest of time and the rest of days.

Dardanos was pleased to hear this and he did as the oracle bid him. After the death of Dardanos, his son Idaios took over his command and the newly built city of Dardanon.¹⁰⁷ Idaios had a son, Tros by name, and this Tros, when Idaios died, took over his command along with the command of Teukros, the king of that land; for he too had died earlier. So Tros became a greater king than his ancestors and he named the entire country the Troad after himself; as was said, it was previously called Teukris after Teukros.¹⁰⁸ Tros had a son named Ilos who, after the death of his father Tros, built the great and populous city against which the Greeks fought for ten years, as was said above, which was called both Troy and Ilion.

88. THAT ILOS, THE SON OF TROS, BUILT ILION, BUILT AN AKROPOLIS AND TEMPLE IN IT, AND THEN MOVED THE GODS AND PALLADIA FROM DARDANON AND PLACED THEM IN ILION¹⁰⁹

Ilios built the akropolis of Ilion that we called *koula*,¹¹⁰ and in it he made a temple; to this temple, which was a sacrosanct and hidden place not to be entered he transferred his ancestral gods and the palladia from the city of Dardanon, and he placed them in the innermost and most inaccessible part of this temple. He legislated the same honors, [68] the mystical and secret ones, and the sacrifices for them at Ilion according to the orders and traditions of his ancestors. The Trojans honored and guarded them with great vigilance and care as things sent by the gods and not made by human hands, especially the palladia, as they were the foundation, survival, and salvation of their city according to the oracle that Dardanos had received concerning them, as was said above. These things lasted until the days of Priam, the king of Troy, whereupon the Greeks arrived for the aforementioned reason concerning Helen, the wife of Menelaos, and they fought

with the Trojans.

89. CONCERNING THE THEFT OF THE PALLADION FROM THE AKROPOLIS OF ILION BY DIOMEDES AND ODYSSEUS¹¹¹

At that time, the Greeks were hard-pressed and distressed that such heroic men and such a great power as their own would have to sit for ten years and still be unable to take this city of Troy. They pondered the reason for this among themselves – either they remembered this or one of the Trojans told them – for the Greeks had friends inside Troy – and he told them about the oracle of Dardanos, the promise of the gods, and the palladia, that for as long as they are in Troy the city would be untaken and unconquered, according to the oracle. They took counsel among each other and sent Diomedes and Odysseus out at night. They dared to undertake this deed, namely to steal the palladia from the akropolis of Troy. By a certain device and secret place they climbed to the akropolis [69] at night and entered into the akropolis at the innermost place of it and the temple. Whether from fear and haste, or because they did not find the other palladion, they took the one and went back to the army of the Greeks again, still at night. Later they advertised this to the Trojans and shocked them. That is what the historians write concerning these gods and the palladia, including Kallistratos, who wrote the history of Samothrace, and Satyros, who collected the myths of the Greeks, as we said.¹¹²

90. WHAT THE POET ARKTINOS WRITES CONCERNING THE PALLADION STOLEN BY DIOMEDES AND ODYSSEUS, THAT IT WAS A COPY AND NOT THE ORIGINAL¹¹³

The most ancient poet Arktinos, whom we mentioned, tells the story about these things in a different way from the others. He says that Zeus gave one palladion not made by human hands to Dardanos, that is an idol of Athena, to protect and preserve the city of Dardanon that he built, and this palladion was later transferred to Ilion, the city of the Trojans, and was hidden in a secret and inaccessible place. No one of the Trojans knew where it was or entered there, but as this palladion was believed to protect the city in the Greek war and had a great reputation throughout the world as being sent by the gods and not made by human hands, the Trojans were afraid of theft and secret attacks, so they secretly and with great artifice constructed a second palladion, similar to and

indistinguishable from the archetype. They themselves did not know this apart from the craftsmen alone who had constructed it. [70] They were the only ones who knew that this one was the prototype and that one was the secondary copy. In appearance, shape, and form there was no difference between them. The prototype was hidden in a secret and inaccessible place, which no one among the Trojans knew, not even their priests, but the secondary copy they placed in the temple, where it was visible and honored with great diligence and piety. This, Arktinos says, was the one stolen by Odysseus and Diomedes from the akropolis. Still, it is clear, whether as the others say or as Arktinos says, that one palladion was left behind in the akropolis of the Trojans, and it was unable to protect the city, and so the oracle given to Dardanos was proven false. For how can the truth come from false gods? Dionysios says that Aeneas transported this palladion and the images of the great gods from Troy to Italy.

91. THAT THE SAMOTHRACIANS HONOR THESE GODS MORE THAN THE OTHER GREEKS¹¹⁴

The Samothracians, that is the people of Samothrace, honor and celebrate these gods more than all the Greeks. And I say this – Dionysios says – trusting in the historians whom we mentioned above. But as for the prototype images and the idols of the gods that Aeneas transported to Italy, I do not know where they are. As we said above,¹¹⁵ we saw their idols and images in the shape of soldiers in many ancient temples in Rome. Some say that that prototype palladion [71] lies in the temple of Vesta in Rome, and is guarded and honored by the consecrated virgin women, in the same temple of Vesta where there is the unquenchable and immortal fire, about which he says that he intends to speak in a later book,¹¹⁶ namely concerning the temple of Vesta, the immortal fire, and the sacred virgins who guard the fire. But what he neglected to say at that time, I will say again based on his own writings.

92. CONCERNING THE TEMPLE OF VESTA THAT IS IN ROME, THAT IT WAS NOT BUILT BY ROMULUS ON ACCOUNT OF HIS MOTHER, BUT RATHER WAS BUILT BY NUMA POMPILIUS. AND THE HISTORY CONCERNING HIS MOTHER, HIS GRANDFATHER, AND HIS UNCLE¹¹⁷

As we said above,¹¹⁸ the ancients had the custom, when they were founding a city, to make the first temple that they built that of Vesta in order to guard the city. It was necessary that four virgin women light an immortal fire in it, that is an unquenchable one. When Romulus founded Rome he did not build a temple of Vesta. This was the reason. In Alba, in the temple of Vesta where the virgins guarded the fire, one of the four priestesses was Ilia, the mother of Romulus; for that was her name. She was the niece of the then king of Alba, Amulius. Amulius had a brother, Nemetor, and Nemetor was the first born and the king by law. But Amulius used force and took over the command of his father. Nemetor had a daughter named Ilia. Amulius feared lest Nemetor give his only-born daughter to some man who might help Nemetor [72] to expel him from the command or make sons who would do this themselves when they came of age. So he pledged his niece Ilia to the temple of Vesta that she might serve there as a priestess and be a virgin for thirty years, as was their custom. The myths then say that Ilia once went to a ravine by the temple, the sort of place that is commonly called a gorge, to get water from a spring for the needs of the temple. Suddenly it became extremely dark and there was a commotion with thunder and lightning: she saw an armed man, that is he was armored from head to toe, who raped her and violated her virginity. They say that this was the god Mars. And she immediately conceived and was with child. She kept this secret for a while, but the matter was disclosed to king Amulius. He wanted to butcher her according to the law as having fornicated with a man. For he did not believe the fantastic story that she told. But the daughter of Amulius, [Julia], the cousin of Ilia, requested that she be spared the death penalty, and freed her. Ilia gave birth to two male children, Remus and Romulus. But Amulius decreed that they be thrown beside the Tiber river to die.

93. HOW THE SHE-WOLF NOURISHED REMUS AND ROMULUS WHEN THEY WERE INFANTS¹¹⁹

But by chance they were discovered by a she-wolf, who approached the children and placed her nipples in their mouth, that is her teats. For the she-wolf happened to have just whelped. This [73] was seen by a shepherd from the mountain and he came down and took up the children. It happened that his wife had just then had a miscarriage, that is she had lost the child that was growing in her womb, and she was exceedingly sad. When she saw these children she rejoiced and raised them herself. They became men with the shepherd as their

father and his wife as their mother, and knew nothing beyond that. This shepherd was the shepherd of the sheep of king Amulius. When the boys matured, they watched and guarded the sheep of the king, which their father had. Now, Nemetor, the true grandfather of these boys, also had sheep and a shepherd near where his brother Amulius had his own. For when God wants to accomplish what he has decided, the opportunities are not lacking.

94. BATTLE OF REMUS AND ROMULUS WITH THE SHEPHERDS OF THEIR GRANDFATHER¹²⁰

The boys came into a dispute with the shepherds of their grandfather Nemetor on account of the sheep. For they, Remus and Romulus – that was how their adoptive father had named them – struck the shepherds of Nemetor out of arrogance and insulted them. The latter reported this to Nemetor, and Nemetor reported it to his brother, king Amulius. Amulius, to prevent his brother from becoming agitated over being overlooked and so starting a rebellion, placed both the shepherd and the boys into his hands to do with as he pleased, even to the point of death. When they were brought bound before Nemetor, in talking about this and that in his house they were recognized as his grandchildren. The shepherd recounted [74] everything from the beginning about the boys.

95. RECOGNITION OF REMUS AND ROMULUS BY THEIR GRANDFATHER¹²¹

Then Nemetor kissed them, cried before them, and took counsel with them. In short order they devised a prudent plan, expelled Amulius from the throne, and turned it over to their grandfather Nemetor. They received money, men, and anything else that they needed and departed from Alba to build Rome. During the foundation of Rome the brothers came into a dispute, fought, and Romulus killed Remus, becoming the sole founder and builder of Rome. He called it Rome after his own name. Romulus did not build a temple of Vesta nor did he establish virgins to guard the sacred fire, lest people be reminded of what his mother had suffered, that she had fornicated even though she was one of the Vestal virgins.

96. THAT NUMA BUILT THE TEMPLE OF VESTA IN ROME¹²²

The second king of Rome, Numa Pompilius, built the temple of Vesta in Rome and followed every ancient tradition with respect to this temple, including the

virgins and the unquenchable fire. It was necessary for the unquenchable fire to be in this temple of Vesta day and night, throughout the year, and for all years – that is why it is called immortal. For this reason we call fire *histia* in a barbarian fashion, because it was in the temple of Hestia that this unquenchable fire always existed. Dionysios says that [75] the palladion was guarded and honored by the virgins in this temple at Rome, the palladion that Aeneas had transported and led from Troy and placed in Lavinium, where the sacred priestesses guarded the sacred fire. With all the modesty that is fitting for an educated man, he says that I ponder what the historians have written, but it is likely that there are other things as well in this temple of Vesta besides those which we who are unworthy, polluted, and sinners do not know.

That is where Dionysios' account regarding the Trojan gods ends, on account of which he again mentioned Samothrace: namely, that these gods and palladia went there first from Arkadia and were honored, and they were being honored and celebrated there until his own days more than anywhere else among the Greeks. Here too we will end our account of these things and our unbounded and untimely babbling. My most elevated and magnificent lord, it was my desire to do something for the relief of your lordship that forced me to babble so, as did the histories that are intertwined in Dionysios' argument, the place-names, the myths of the Greeks, and the reasons why Dionysios wrote history in the first place. If it is now or ever will be useful in some circumstance, it will have served its purpose, the purpose that I kept in mind when I set out to write this. If it turns out entirely to the contrary, then no one is harmed and the blame and accusation, and all the more so the vanity and the pointlessness of my babbling, is all on me, who has said all these things. For this alone I will not be blamed, however, that I have eagerly carried out the command of your elevated lordship.

NOTES

- 1 Efthymiades and Mazarakis, 'La chronique familiale,' proposed that Kanaboutzes was the author and protagonist of the (anonymous) "family chronicle" appended to Vat. gr. 1601, but Pérez Martín has shown, on paleographical grounds, that it was written, and very likely also concerned, one Antonia Malaspina, a Greek-educated Genoese man from Phokaia: 'Some Hints.'
- 2 In section 33 Kanaboutzes says that the Venetians held Argos, which was true until 1463.
- 3 Kyriacus of Ancona, *Letter* 6.5–6 (pp. 28–29).
- 4 For gold and alchemy, see *Commentary* 13.
- 5 Hinterberger, 'Ο πεζός λόγος,' 408–409; Efthymiades and Mazarakis, 'La chronique familiale,' 621–622.
- 6 Ioannes Eugenikos, *Letter* 11.
- 7 Diller, 'Joannes Canabutzes and Michael Chrysococces.'
- 8 Magdalino and Mavroudi, *The Occult Sciences*, 25–26, claim that Kanaboutzes possessed a manuscript of

the *Testament of Solomon*, but this seems to be a mistake: that manuscript (Oxon. Holkham gr. 82 = Libr. of the Earl of Leicester 99) contains his treatise and the *Testament*, and was copied long after his death by Benediktos Episkopopoulos: McCown, *The Testament of Solomon*, 11–12. Efthymiades and Mazarakis, ‘La chronique familiale,’ argue that Kanaboutzes owned (and supplemented) Vat. gr. 1601, which contains an epitome of Josephos’ *Jewish Antiquities*, but Pérez Martín, ‘Some Hints,’ reattributes it on paleographical grounds to Kanaboutzes’ acquaintance (via Ioannes Eugenikos) Antonio Malaspina.

- 9 Hinterberger, ‘Ο πεζός λόγος,’ 415–418.
- 10 Hinterberger, ‘Ο πεζός λόγος,’ 418–421.
- 11 Kanaboutzes’ claim that Justinian was one of “our” emperors (14) is inconclusive, because he may mean “us Christians” (in contrast to the other ruler mentioned here, Kleopatra of Egypt); also, Justinian was claimed by the Latin West as well as by the Byzantines.
- 12 Kaldellis, *A New Herodotos*, 225–227.
- 13 For Dionysios in general, see Gabba, *Dionysios*; Wiater, *The Ideology of Classicism*.
- 14 Shawcross, ‘Re-Inventing the Homeland.’
- 15 Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity*, 170–174.
- 16 For additional fifteenth-century efforts to preserve that sense, see Lamers, *Reinventing the Ancient Greeks*, 59 (on Maphaeus).
- 17 Wortley, *Studies on the Cult of Relics*, III. One of the earliest sources for this was Prokopios, whom the author of the “family chronicle” evidently had read.
- 18 Diller, ‘Ioannes Canabutzes,’ 273–275.
- 19 Diller, ‘The Autographs of Georgius Gemistus Pletho,’ 38–39.
- 20 i.e., Ioannes (Giovanni).
- 21 ἄπὸ μέρους is an odd construction. S. Efthymiades informs me that *merikos* in hagiography can mean “detailed” (cf. mod. Greek *leptomereia*, a detail).
- 22 Plato, *Republic* 473c–d.
- 23 Prov. 3.19.
- 24 Ps. 103(104).24.
- 25 Cf. Plutarch, *Alexander* 7 (cf. Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 20.5). Kanaboutzes elaborates on the brief original.
- 26 Herodotos, *Histories* 1.65; Xenophon, *Apology* 15; Plutarch, *Lykourgos* 5.
- 27 Or “hewers,” from *pelekaō*, to chip away or hew with an ax.
- 28 From Italian *buzzo* (“belly”); Trapp, *Lexikon*, 292 says that in Greek it meant “barrel.”
- 29 A base or foundation.
- 30 Italian for a sixth.
- 31 On alchemy in Byzantium, and in Kanaboutzes in particular, see Merianos and Sakorrafou, ‘Μαρτυρίες περί αλχημείας,’ 55–57.
- 32 i.e., “foundry.”
- 33 In section 5.
- 34 Gen. 1.31.
- 35 i.e., Miletos (mod. Balat).
- 36 *Rom. Ant.* 1.7 (Dionysios at Rome) and 1.4 (Greek ignorance about Rome).
- 37 *Rom. Ant.* 1.4.
- 38 In Dionysios, the Greeks attribute this to chance (*tyche*) and not the gods.
- 39 *Rom. Ant.* 1.5–6.
- 40 *Rom. Ant.* 1.5–6.
- 41 Matt. 24.2.
- 42 *Rom. Ant.* 1.6 (much elaborated by Kanaboutzes).
- 43 This is the first passage where he calls the Romans “Romaioi” rather than “Romanoi.” He may be

pointing to the Byzantine empire here.

44 *Rom. Ant.* 1.6; see the following note.

45 Dionysios does not exactly say this. He wants to thank Rome for the benefits it has conferred on him.

46 *Rom. Ant.* 1.11.

47 *Rom. Ant.* 1.17.

48 For Thessaly as a part of Macedonia, see section 48 below.

49 *Rom. Ant.* 1.31.

50 *Rom. Ant.* 1.34.

51 For Kanaboutzes, the lower straits are those of Gibraltar, the upper straits the Hellespont and Bosphoros.

52 i.e., the straits of Gibraltar.

53 *Rom. Ant.* 4.59.

54 *Rom. Ant.* 4.60–61.

55 This information is not in Dionysios.

56 *Rom. Ant.* 2.38.

57 *Rom. Ant.* 1.60.

58 *Rom. Ant.* 1.61.

59 *Rom. Ant.* 1.61.

60 Dionysios does not mention the name of his wife or the names of all the Pleiades.

61 i.e., the Pleiades.

62 *Rom. Ant.* 1.61.

63 *Rom. Ant.* 1.61.

64 See below for why he considers this to be east.

65 i.e., the straits of Gibraltar (see section 34 above).

66 i.e., the north.

67 i.e., the Nestos river.

68 He probably means the Black Sea opening of the Bosphoros.

69 *Rom. Ant.* 1.61.

70 *Rom. Ant.* 1.61.

71 *Rom. Ant.* 1.61.

72 Trapp, *Lexikon*, 195, corrects this to *arikon* and relates it to *aerikon* (relating to the air).

73 He means the Thebans.

74 *Rom. Ant.* 1.61.

75 i.e., Assos and Behram.

76 See section 17 above.

77 *Rom. Ant.* 1.61.

78 See section 55 above.

79 *Rom. Ant.* 1.61.

80 This and all other citations are in Dionysios.

81 This is a garbled reference to the deme Xypete (whose demesman would be a Xypetaion).

82 i.e., houses or clans.

83 This confuses the demos (people of Athens) and the 139 demes in which they were registered. This digression is not in Dionysios.

84 I could not identify this word. It is probably a corruption of some form of *dynamai*, “as he was able.”

85 *Rom. Ant.* 1.67–68.

86 *Rom. Ant.* 1.46–47.

87 Actually from Turkish *kule* (“citadel”); Trapp, *Lexikon*, 872.

88 *Rom. Ant.* 1.46–47.

89 *Rom. Ant.* 1.47 (treaty) and 1.55 (oracle).

- 90 *Rom. Ant.* 1.55.
- 91 *Rom. Ant.* 1.56.
- 92 *Rom. Ant.* 1.57–59.
- 93 γένος (race) must be an error for γεγυός. In the corresponding passage of Dionysios we have ἀγγέλεται τὰ γινόμενα (1.57.2).
- 94 *Rom. Ant.* 1.59.
- 95 *Rom. Ant.* 1.66–68.
- 96 *Rom. Ant.* 1.68.
- 97 *Rom. Ant.* 1.68.
- 98 See section 80 above.
- 99 *Rom. Ant.* 1.68.
- 100 *Rom. Ant.* 1.61 and 1.68.
- 101 See section 54 above.
- 102 See section 50 above.
- 103 This is not what Dionysios says; *Rom. Ant.* 1.68.3–4: Dardanos took both the palladia and the images of the gods with him from Samothrace. Nothing is said about him leaving the originals behind.
- 104 *Rom. Ant.* 1.61 and 1.68.
- 105 See section 67 above.
- 106 *Rom. Ant.* 1.68.4 (oracle).
- 107 The history of the descendants of Dardanos is not related by Dionysios in this way.
- 108 See section 67 above.
- 109 *Rom. Ant.* 1.68–69, but Dionysios does not mention Ilios.
- 110 See section 73 above.
- 111 *Rom. Ant.* 1.69. IK elaborates Dionysios' brief mention.
- 112 See section 81 above.
- 113 *Rom. Ant.* 1.69.3. IK elaborates Dionysios' brief discussion.
- 114 *Rom. Ant.* 1.69.4.
- 115 See section 80 above.
- 116 At *Rom. Ant.* 1.69.4, Dionysios promises a later discussion, which comes at *Rom. Ant.* 2.64–66.
- 117 *Rom. Ant.* 2.64–66 (Vesta) and *Rom. Ant.* 1.76–79 (Ilia and Mars).
- 118 See section 65 above.
- 119 *Rom. Ant.* 1.79.
- 120 *Rom. Ant.* 1.79–81.
- 121 *Rom. Ant.* 1.81–82 (recognition); the rest is extremely condensed.
- 122 *Rom. Ant.* 2.64–66 and then back to 1.67–68.

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